Ban Human Cloning LEON R. KASS

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Philip Roth's Horniness
ZOË HELLER

The U.N.'s Hypocrisy
THE EDITORS

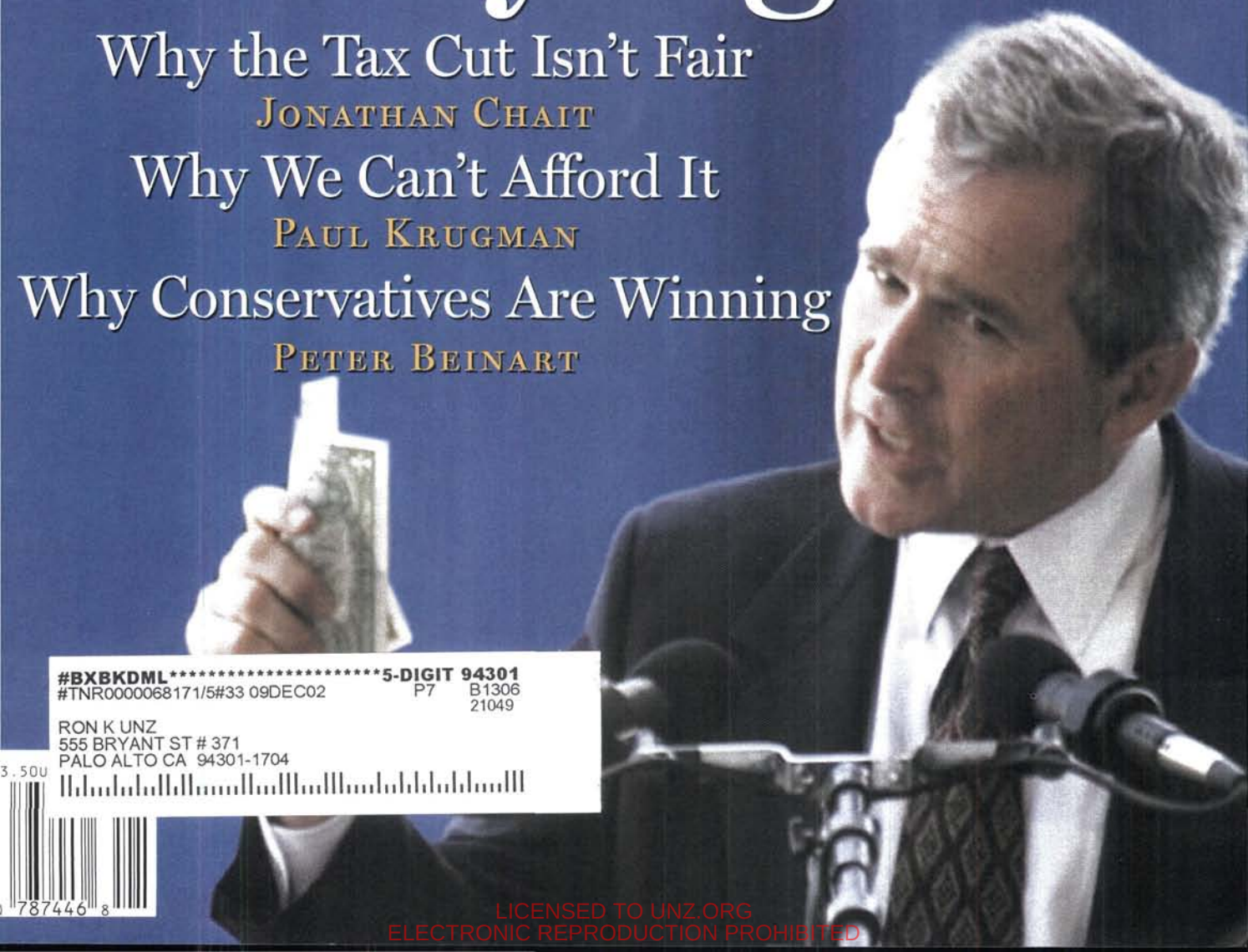
AY 21, 2001

He's Lying

Why the Tax Cut Isn't Fair
JONATHAN CHAIT

Why We Can't Afford It
PAUL KRUGMAN

Why Conservatives Are Winning
PETER BEINART



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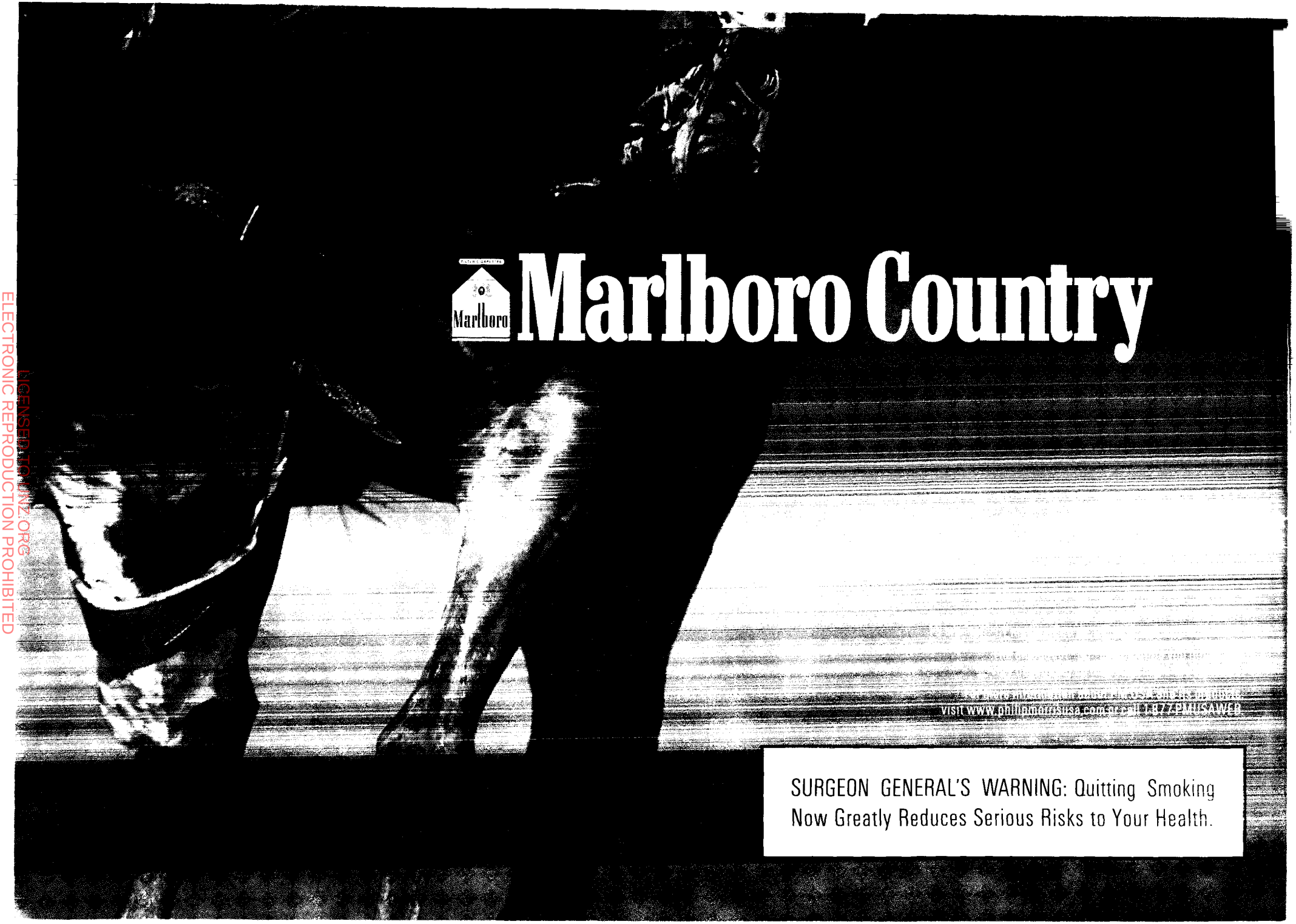
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The freshman

TO THE EDITORS:

Since when are we supposed to expect much from a freshman senator, even if she is Hillary Clinton ("Dull and Duller," by Michael Crowley, April 9 & 16)? The fairly recent biography of Ted Kennedy by Adam Clymer is a good primer on how freshman senators should behave: Watch, listen, be patient, defer. Otherwise, they likely will offend the Senate hierarchy and walk right into a legislative brick wall. Clinton is just doing her job; and if she's not making the papers, she's probably relieved.

It's Crowley's earlier article on Tom Daschle ("Last, Best Hope," March 26) that deserves the title and thesis "Dull and Duller." Daschle has the clout and experience to launch an inspired defense. Yet, according to Crowley, his greatest contribution at the national level is the Lexus-and-muffler analogy. And the quote from a senior Senate GOP aide—"They have created gridlock in one breath and called us a do-nothing Congress in the next"—is hardly a badge for Daschle. Rather, it makes him sound like a master of gridlock.

Instead of criticizing Clinton, why not take Daschle to task? His lack of aggressive leadership is part of why the Democrats are "getting rolled" by an administration that lost the popular vote. The recent compromise on a diluted Bush tax cut demonstrates that Daschle's style is to pour a little water on Bush initiatives, not stop them.

DAVID FINE
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITORS:

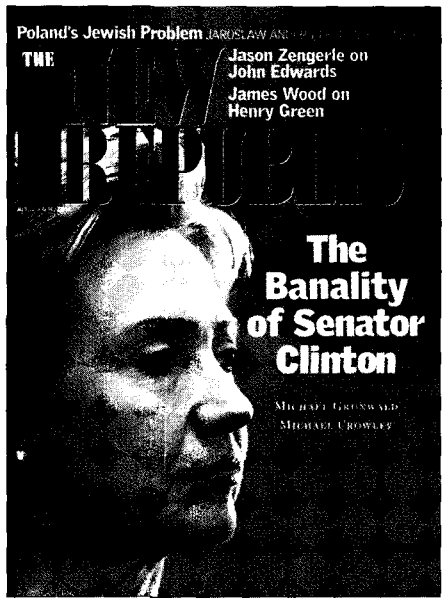
I empathize with Michael Crowley's horror at the tedium of Hillary Clinton's first days in the Senate. Imagine a senator attending committee meetings—and staying awake. Or willingly submerging herself "in policy minutiae that would make a C-SPAN junkie snore." I can see why Washington would find this hard to understand. But I can also understand why New Yorkers voted for Clinton in the first place. She promised New Yorkers that she would work hard for them—and now that she's in office, she's doing just that.

TOM MORAN
New York, New York

Deplore

TO THE EDITORS:

Your Notebook item on Harvard University's presidency (March 26) referred to Neil Rudenstine as merely a fund-raiser, and I write to deplore that description. I've known Rudenstine since he became president of Harvard, and, grateful as I



am (as a former scholarship student) for Harvard's fund-raising, I've personally seen Rudenstine in many other admirable roles, both scholarly and personal. He has appeared as a speaker at the Signet Society, giving a moving talk on the poems of James Merrill; as a visitor to my undergraduate Shakespeare seminar; as the writer of thoughtful, bold position papers, especially on the benefits of diversity; as a kind and unstinting friend to faculty members (including myself) undergoing illness; as a tireless and genial dawn-to-midnight representative of Harvard at countless non-fund-raising town, gown, local, and national events. Anyone observing Rudenstine's day-to-day existence could tell similar stories.

HELEN VENDLER
Porter University Professor
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Building code

TO THE EDITORS:

TNR misrepresents the facts about the National Wildlife Federation's new headquarters by failing to report that Fairfax County law requires three parking spaces to be installed for every 1,000 square feet of building space (Notebook, April 9 & 16). NWF's new headquarters is 95,000 square feet, so its 285 parking spaces are the fewest allowed under the law. In addition, the parking lot features bioretention ponds designed to help naturally purify runoff from the lot before it enters the local watershed. Erecting a tiered parking garage would have more than tripled the parking-facility budget, a factor we could not accept given NWF's commitment to devoting the greatest amount of its budget directly to conservation.

We selected this property specifically because of its easy access to the Washington and Old Dominion bike trail and public transportation, and we actively encourage our employees, the majority of whom live in suburban Virginia, to carpool. NWF's commitment to conservation and compliance with Virginia law form the real foundation of our new building.

MARK VAN PUTTEN
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation
Reston, Virginia

Burned

TO THE EDITORS:

In his review of my book *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, Alan Wolfe attributes strange views to me ("Alien Nation," March 26). He says that I approve of arranged marriage and that this amounts to an "indirect assault on intermarriage," by which I take him to mean interethnic marriage. I explicitly rule out coerced marriage and defend arranged marriage only if the married partners implicitly or explicitly endorse and freely follow the practice. I fail to see why this is wrong and how it rules out interethnic marriage.

Wolfe also remarks that I justify book burning. Again, he distorts a complex argument. What I say is that British Muslims had a democratic right to protest Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, including demonstrating, picketing publishers, and "even perhaps burning a copy of the book" to attract the attention of an indifferent public. For me, the act of burning a copy of the book was understandable (but not commendable), and that, too, only in an extreme situation as a means to secure a dialogue.

Wolfe argues that I am "frightened by the thought of cultural dilution" and do not want immigrants to change their ways. I repeatedly argue in the book that cultures are human constructs, have no settled identities, must and do change, and can and should borrow from each other. This is one of the main reasons behind my defense of multiculturalism. I therefore criticize cultural ghettos, preoccupation with cultural purity or authenticity, and uncritical adherence to traditions.

Finally, Wolfe says that I am "dismissive" of individual rights; I say the opposite. I greatly value these rights, including free speech, but argue that they conflict, that none is absolute and trumps all others, that they necessarily limit each other, and that we need to strike a sensible balance among them.

BHIKHU PAREKH
London, England

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Union Due

THERE IS A classic issue of *Private Eye*, the British satirical magazine, whose cover photograph portrays two elderly Brits fast asleep, jaws agape, in a couple of deck chairs in a park. The headline? "EUROPE: THE GREAT DEBATE BEGINS."

Well, the truth is, it has just begun. On April 29 the increasingly confident German chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, released a blueprint for the future of the European Union. It is, I think, the most important document hardly anyone in Washington has heard of. It's important because it ends any doubt about the new Germany's commitment to a federal European state, modeled closely on Germany's own constitution. Not only will the new European Union have a single currency by next year; if Schroeder's proposals are implemented, it will soon have a single government and a real parliament. Or, put another way: By the end of Bush's term, the United States could well be the second-largest economic and political power in the world, playing second fiddle to a European behemoth powered by Germany, handled by France, with Britain as a mere province within. The United States will have lost its most critical ally and gained its most formidable competitor since the Soviet Union. And you thought China was a problem.

The current EU—an intricate bureaucratic structure created over 50 years of incremental growth—has only one truly democratic institution: the European Parliament. The Parliament doesn't have much power, though. The ruling body, for all intents and purposes, is the Council of Ministers, a rotating group of elected politicians from different member countries who meet on an ad hoc basis. Then there's the bureaucracy: the European Commission. Schroeder wants to beef up the Parliament and give it direct control over the EU budget, now handled by the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. He'd enlarge the Council of Ministers into a Senate, to balance the Parliament, which would become a lower House. Then he'd have the Parliament directly elect the head of the Commission, and turn it into a de facto European government. Member states would retain many powers—as many powers are retained by the various *Länder* in federal Germany. Sure, the Commission's budget would remain tiny compared with most member countries; but there's no mistaking the direction of it all. The architecture of a new European federal state would be in place. All that would be needed is some defining event or person to bring it fully to life. Think Bismarck, with focus groups.

Ominously, the French seem enthusiastic about the endeavor. On Wednesday, President Chirac gave a speech in which he rhetorically asked, "Is it not the moment to grace the European Union with a constitution?" (When one gets to be president of France, most of one's questions become rhetorical.) Even the Brits are warming up. The British foreign secretary, Robin Cook, was just elected president of the Party of European Socialists and happily signed a declaration calling for "a new definition of the role of national Parliaments in the building of Europe, while strengthening the European Parliament." Sounds like Schroeder's scheme to me.

To the worries of nationalists across Europe—in places as far afield as France, Denmark, and Britain—the EU elites have a pretty good response. A colloquial rendition might be: What did you expect? The logic of the European Union has been pretty clear since the Treaty of Rome in 1957. From mere economic cooperation to a single market and then a single currency, from treaties by sovereign countries to a single parliament and pooled executive, from wholly sovereign nations to a European Court of Human Rights that overrules national Supreme Courts month after month, the EU is to a single European state what acorns are to oak trees. It's only a matter of time. Or, as a German European commissioner said on German television this week, "The British think that [the Schroeder proposal] is a German federalist concept intended to give the European Union a federal organization. But what is the EU Council other than a federalist instrument?" Exactly.

What does this have to do with American foreign policy? Quite a lot. We saw an illustration of the mischief a united European bloc can wreak when the Europeans conspired last week to boot the United States off the U.N. Human Rights Commission. The enormous power of a single entity comprising a population and a GNP greater than the United States' will make future embarrassments even more likely. And Washington will find it increasingly difficult to play one European power against another. Take America's reliable military fig leaf, Britain. In the Gulf war, the Balkans, and the United Nations, Britain has been the indispensable nation, to coin a phrase, when the United States needs a patina of multilateralism to cover its intervention abroad. What happens when that fig leaf has to ask permission from Brussels, Berlin, and Paris before it can shield America's privates?

But the military question is in some ways the least worrisome. The EU is a military mess. If Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell expect the EU to shoulder the military burdens of the United States, they've obviously forgotten Bosnia. But the EU is still a diplomatic power—able to tilt decisively against the United States in tense situations in the Middle East or China. And if the euro stabilizes, the EU may also have a medium-term shot at a global currency to rival the dollar. Once that happens, the enormous benefits the United States accrues from having the dollar as the world currency could disappear. During the Kyoto kerfuffle, European columnists talked of withdrawing support for American foreign debt in retaliation. One day the EU may be organized enough to make those words count.

I'm not saying the EU is all bad. Postwar economic and political cooperation—pioneered by the Marshall Plan and the Treaty of Rome—was vital to Western Europe's democratic revival and success in the cold war. But the cold war is over, and the most telling feature of the current EU is its *un*democratic structure. Schroeder wants to rectify this, but even a stronger European Parliament, without an extant European nation, cannot replace the true democracy of national assemblies. In all likelihood, Schroeder's plan would give a democratic sheen to what has been a profoundly autocratic, post-national exercise. Most Germans, for example, opposed trading in their marks for euros. But they had no real choice and no referendum. Almost half the French population opposed it as well, but it was rammed through. The Brits will vote on the euro within two years, but they know the long-term die is cast. They can't afford to leave the EU altogether; and as long as they're in it, the federalist momentum will slowly eat them alive. If Tony Blair gets his way, the United Kingdom will shortly be better described as the Appended Province. I can't see much good in this for the United States, although some may differ. But, whatever your view, it's time we took notice of what is actually going on—if only to begin, however cautiously, to expect the worst.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Rx for Nurses

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

Recently, I spent a day in a large urban teaching hospital watching nurses and other health professionals save lives. In a neonatal intensive care unit with 28 struggling premature newborns, I saw amazing modern technology and nurses doing miraculous work. But wherever I went, I heard stories of understaffing, low pay, exhausting hours and mandatory overtime, and most alarmingly, nurses who love their profession but are planning to leave it.

That we have a shortage of nurses isn't news anymore. Our critical need will rise to almost half a million by 2008. Like teachers, nurses are opting for other professions previously unavailable to women. But disturbing new numbers highlight even greater threats to the nursing profession and the overall quality of our nation's healthcare.

A new poll commissioned by the AFT's healthcare division and conducted by Peter Hart Associates shows that fully one fifth of the nation's nurses are ready to leave right now because they're fed up with horrendous working conditions and the lack of support and training they receive. Equally alarming, the study found that more than half of current nurses under age 39 have thought about leaving. Imagine the crisis we would face if this came to pass.

Patient care compromised

Nursing is a demanding profession. Those who go into it—like those who go into teaching—do so out of a commitment to helping people. That's why these new poll numbers are especially dismaying. Harsh decisions by the healthcare industry have made it virtually impossible for nurses to fulfill that commitment and so they are leaving in droves.

Cutting costs has led to cutbacks in staffing, which have led to the hiring of unqualified new workers and mandatory overtime for nurses. The bottom line of this shortsighted approach is that the burdens on nurses are increased and patient care is compromised. It's frustrating for a nurse who wants to do a good job, and it's dangerous for patients.

Here's how one nurse describes what she faces at work: "At 42 years old, I ache all over after a 16-hour shift, I go home tired, and then I'm up again in 4 1/2 hours to do another 8- or 16-hour shift. How competent can a nurse be in these conditions?" The current system also has cut back on support for new nurses. As a result, one veteran nurse says she can no longer recommend nursing. "They plop you on a floor and don't give you the training anymore. It's terrifying for someone new." I've heard this from teachers, too, who are "plopped" into overcrowded classrooms without adequate support.

Poor working conditions for nurses endanger their patients.

These stories are not aberrations—they are the result of business as usual. When dedication is exploited, you get the kind of blind exhaustion that leads to horrific stories like one about the nurse who was forced to work the night shift, fell asleep at the wheel of her car on the way home, and hit a telephone pole.

But there is a silver lining. According to our poll, nearly three fourths of the nurses thinking about leaving would stay if improvements were made. And we know what needs to be done. First, ban mandatory overtime—for the good of patients and those professionals who care for them. Second, raise salaries and improve benefits. Third, enact federal standards for healthcare staffing levels. Fourth, encourage more people to enter the profession, particularly minorities and men, by adopting student-loan forgiveness programs and encouraging healthcare systems to offer tuition and stipends to employees who return to school. We need more nurses to increase the attention caregivers can provide patients. Just as a lower teacher-to-student ratio improves learning, so too does a lower nurse-to-patient ratio improve healthcare.

Ending a vicious cycle

Acting responsibly now can end the vicious cycle in which increasingly unattractive jobs become more difficult to fill, causing more understaffing and even less personalized patient care, and leaving nurses feeling more used up, worn down, and burned out. One nurse I recently learned about would go out to the parking lot and get sick after finishing her shift each night because of the stressful conditions. You won't be surprised to hear that she has since left nursing.

It is ludicrous to recruit people into a profession, prepare them to uphold its standards, and then make their work environment so poor it sends them running from that profession at high speed. Yet that is what's happening in nursing today. If you've ever been hospitalized, or worried about someone who was, you know what a difference quality nursing care can make. It's time to make sure that hard-working nurses get the support they deserve—so they can provide all of us and our loved ones with the care we need. ▮

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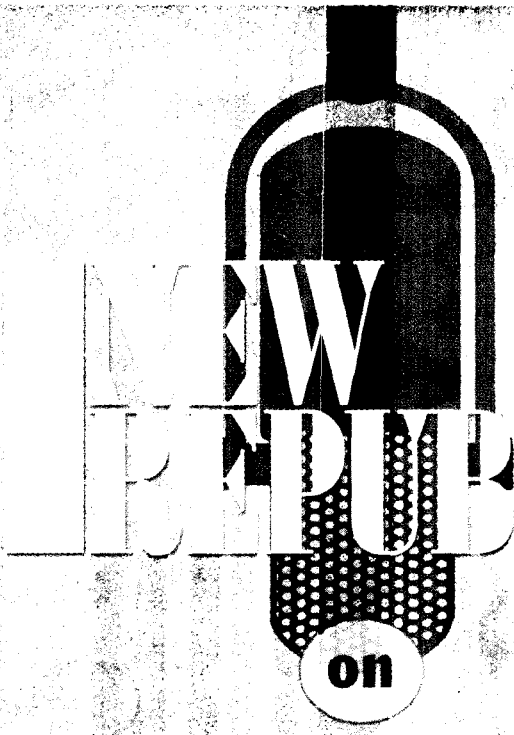

NEW REPUBLIC

on

The Tax Cut

A discussion moderated by New Republic editor Peter Beinart

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

PAUL KRUGMAN
Professor of Economics, Princeton University
Columnist, The New York Times

STEPHEN MOORE
President, Club for Growth

JONATHAN CHAIT
Senior Editor, The New Republic

AMITY SHLAES
Columnist, The Financial Times
Author, The Greedy Hand: Why Taxes Drive Americans Crazy

MAY 17, 2001

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Error of Commission

WHEN THE UNITED States lost its seat on the United Nations Human Rights Commission last week, liberals responded by blaming America—or at least the Bush administration—first. *The New York Times* attributed the humiliation to "rising resentment abroad about America's often patronizing treatment of the U.N." House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt blamed the vote on "U.S. unilateralism." Presidential busybody John Kerry took it as evidence that the international community now sees "a lack of a sense of honesty" in the United States. New York Representative Nita Lowey chastised the administration for its "laissez-faire attitude toward diplomacy."

Sure, the Bush administration screwed up. It should have done a better job counting votes. Having a U.N. ambassador in place would have helped. So would paying our U.N. dues. In fact, that very week, America lost its spot on the International Narcotics Control Board, another U.N. body, as well. The hyper-capable "professionals" of the Bush foreign policy team look less professional every day.

But let's be clear: The Bush administration is guilty of diplomatic failure. The countries that voted the United States off the commission are guilty of moral failure. And it reveals something unpleasant about contemporary American liberalism that so many prestigious liberal journalists and politicians can't tell the difference. Many liberals still can't bear the idea that other countries dislike the United States, and their anguish at American unpopularity is greater than their commitment to the principles that provoke it. In fact, much of the resentment that prompted the U.N. vote is resentment toward principles of which Americans should be proud. After all, there are many ways other countries could have retaliated against America's nonpayment of dues; its refusal to sign international treaties on land mines, the right to food, and global warming; and its insistence on missile defense. But they chose to kick America off the human rights commission because they are particularly upset about the way the United States handles human rights—i.e., it speaks up for them. As *The Washington Post* has reported, the architects of America's ouster appear to have been China and Cuba, two countries with a powerful interest in not having international bodies probe their treatment of their people. And it is no secret that the European countries—who could have stepped down and guaranteed the United States a spot on the commission—also resent America's public commitment to human rights because it gets in the way of business. Gephardt blamed the U.N. vote on "U.S. unilateralism," as if the main problem was Washington's refusal to sign the land-mine treaty. But if the main criteria for selection to the panel had been responsible international conduct, presumably the 54 voting countries would not have chosen Libya and Sudan, both of which sponsor terrorism against their neighbors. The real criteria wasn't responsible international conduct at all—unless you define it as the willingness to turn a blind eye to human rights.

American unilateralism is not, as some conservatives seem to imagine, a good in itself. But neither, as many liberals imply, is it a disgrace to be avoided at all costs. Human rights is, in many ways, America's particular contribution to the conduct of international affairs. We should not be surprised that it is less cherished by developing countries whose history of colonialism makes them hypersensitive to infringements of sovereignty and whose own human rights records often cannot withstand careful scrutiny. Nor should we be surprised that many European governments view moral questions as a bothersome distraction from the realpolitik that dominates the European diplomatic tradition.

This doesn't mean America should seek isolation. We should look for coalitions when they further our principles, and we shouldn't alienate other countries with petty intransigence over payment of our U.N. dues. But neither should our isolation on questions of human rights come as a shock. For a period since the cold war's end, the United Nations has seemed relatively amenable to American interests and ideals, but it is worth remembering that, historically, that is a pleasant aberration. It may be that the United States is entering a more familiar period, one that resembles the era Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously described in *Commentary* in 1974, when he advised the United States to approach the United Nations as a nation in isolated opposition. If America earns that isolation in defense of international freedom, it is no badge of shame. Now, as then, we should wear it with pride. ■

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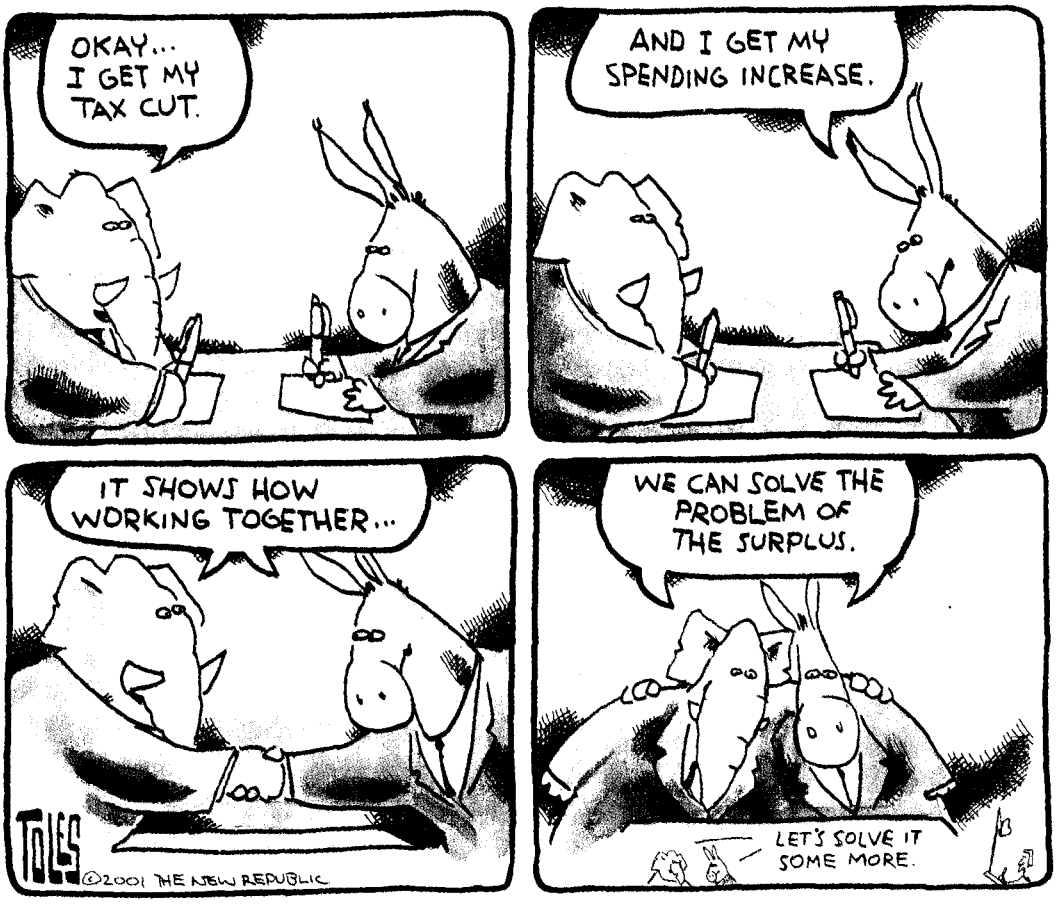
N O T E B O O K

SANCTA KUNEITRA: The road to Damascus has an old history of illuminations, and last week it provided still more clarification about the true condition of the world. Two clarifications, to be precise. The first concerned the politics of Syria, the second concerned the politics of Rome. When Bashar al-Assad succeeded his cruel and tenebrous father last year, there was much talk of a new wind blowing through the Syrian state. The country's new president was an ophthalmologist who spoke English fluently and dug Phil Collins and prowled the Internet: modernity, at last! But no sooner had Pope John Paul II arrived at Damascus Airport than President Assad greeted him with an outburst of medieval garbage. Assad suggested that Christians and Muslims unite against the Jewish state to the south because the Jews "try to kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality with which they betrayed Jesus Christ and the same way that they tried to commit treachery against the Prophet Mohammed." This was not precisely what Phil Collins had in mind. And the pope sat and listened and said nothing. Does the Holy See not see? Vatican officials acted annoyed when pressed for a clarification of the pontifical passivity in the face of the president's anti-Semitic oration. "The position of the Holy See regarding anti-Semitism is very clear and [has] been repeated thousands of times by the pope himself." One more repetition would have gone a long way. But then the pope made matters worse by proceeding to Kuneitra, in the Golan Heights, to offer a prayer for peace. Kuneitra is a town that Israel occupied in 1967 in the course of its defense of its existence against an onslaught of Syrian tanks, and in 1974 it quit Kuneitra on the silly assumption that its withdrawal would be met by a similar flexibility on the Syrian side. The Syrians have left the town in ruins for propaganda purposes. Kuneitra, in sum, is a site holy to nothing except Baathist anti-Zionism. What was the pope doing there? Was he being used willingly or unwillingly? Or was he not being used at all? The spectacle of his pilgrimage to this capital of hatred was certainly unedifying. It appears that the road to Damascus doesn't change minds anymore.

LOUISVILLE SLUGFEST: In the weeks since John B. Judis's story ("Sullied Heritage," TNR, April 23) exposing Labor Secretary Elaine Chao's failure to disclose her directorship in a business involved in a joint venture with a Chinese government company—and the unwillingness of her husband, Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell, to disclose the donors to the McConnell Center at the University of Louisville—things have taken a familiar turn in the Bluegrass State. Following up on the story with admirable intensity, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* has called on Chao and McConnell to "come clean" and remarked of Chao's failure to disclose: "If Hillary Clinton had offered that kind of excuse for failing to reveal a similar relationship with a company linked to the Chinese government, there would have been a kleig-lit congressional probe faster than you can say 'Dan Burton.'" On April 29, McConnell fired back. He described the newspaper's editorial as "xenophobic," an "outbreak of yellow fever" and "subtle racism." If anyone was surprised at the conservative Republican's Al Sharpton-like reply, he shouldn't have been. This is what McConnell always does. In 1996, his Democratic opponent, Steve Beshear, ran a TV ad noting that, in twelve years in the Senate, McConnell had gotten his name on only one bill that passed into law, a 1992 measure that "protects the interests of Hong Kong's business community." McConnell immediately accused Beshear of "play[ing] the race card." How so? Presumably because McConnell's wife, Chao, is Asian American, and Hong Kong


OKAY... I GET MY TAX CUT.
AND I GET MY SPENDING INCREASE.
IT SHOWS HOW WORKING TOGETHER...
WE CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE SURPLUS.
LET'S SOLVE IT SOME MORE.
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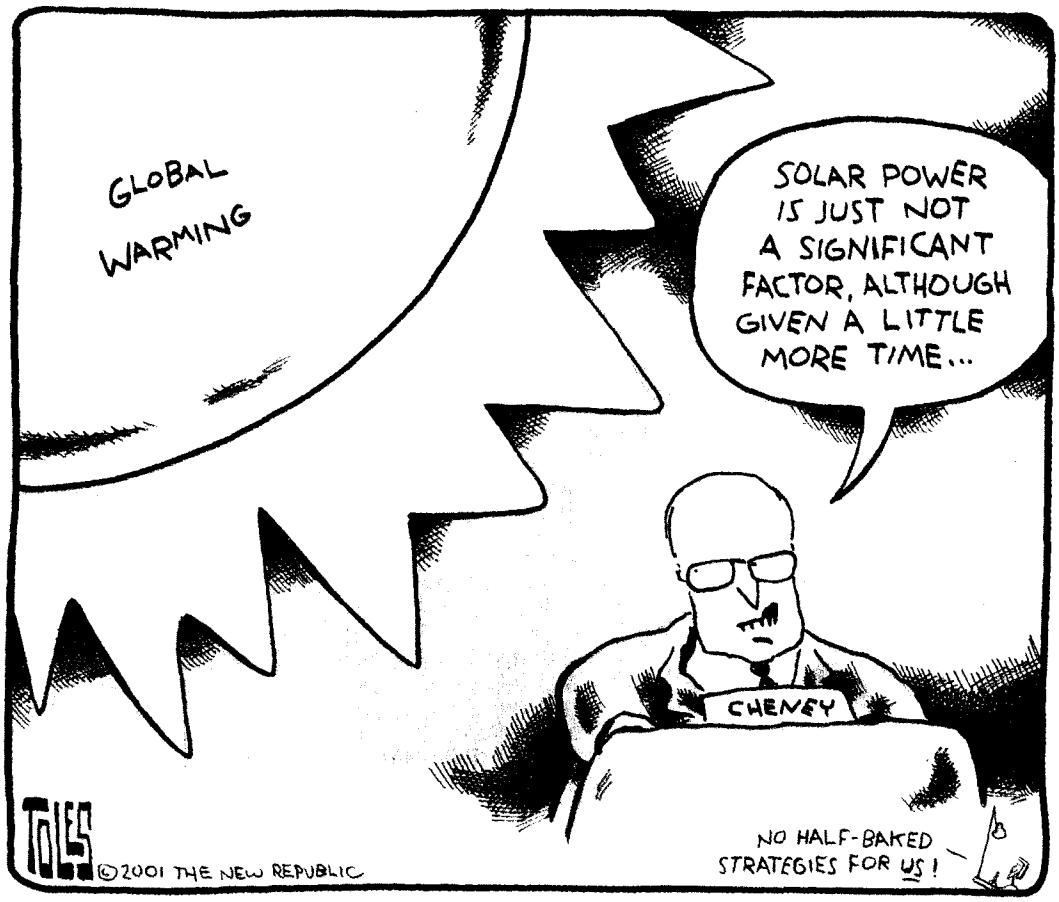
is in Asia. The *Courier-Journal*, though, has not been cowed. "The Senator's office asks indignantly whether we would be writing about these issues if his wife's name were not Chao," it editorialized in response to McConnell's letter. "The answer, obviously, is yes.... The light being shone on these Chinese connections is part of a debate, within the Senator's own political party, over Beijing's desire to impact American policy." The newspaper also noted that while retired Kentucky Senator Wendell Ford also had an educational center named after him, its donors are listed on glass panels in the entryway. Why isn't McConnell willing to reveal his donors? The editorial was titled "WAITING FOR ANSWERS." So are we.

CONTROL FREAKS: This week the Bush administration released an outline of its much-awaited energy plan, and, predictably, the plan had little use for price controls. By way of explanation, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer admonished that "[p]rice controls will make the prices go higher and make people wait in lines." Um, no. By definition, price controls keep prices low, which is why people tend to clamor for them when prices rise. But Fleischer at least is correct on the principle that price controls "make people wait in lines," right? Actually, no again. While it's true that forcing prices down discourages production, which then depresses supply and can lead to rationing, none of that applies unless prices are at their competitive levels to begin with. But in California, the epicenter of the energy crisis, prices are well *above* their competitive levels—and they have been for months. Thanks to the market power that sloppy deregulation allowed them to exploit, wholesale energy producers in California can drive up prices by withholding supply, thereby gouging consumers. In other words, the only reason there's an energy shortage is that it's profitable for suppliers to create one. If, on the other hand, the wholesalers faced a price cap, they would lose any incentive to withhold supply (it doesn't pay to withhold supply if that's not going to drive up prices). Under that scenario, the best thing suppliers could do for themselves would be to sell all they could at the going rate. Asked about imposing price caps in California, an anonymous administration official told *The Washington Post* that "the president will not support a policy that will make the problem worse." Given the president's connections with the energy supply industry, an appropriate question might be: Worse for whom?

LEFTOVERS: In his February speech before a joint session of Congress, George W. Bush first outlined the contours of his budget plan. "We have funded our priorities. We've paid down all the available debt. We have prepared for contingencies. And we still have money left over," the new president declared. "The people of America have been overcharged, and, on their behalf, I'm here asking for a refund." At the time, we suggested that this formulation—spending first, debt reduction second, and tax cuts with what's "left over"—was a less-than-honest description of how the administration formulated its budget. And now it appears that Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley agrees. Describing the $300 billion the Senate budget compromise sets aside for a prescription-drug benefit—more than Bush had initially proposed but far too little to provide universal coverage for seniors—Grassley said, "We're going to start at the bottom of the economic ladder and work our way up until we run out of money." But wait, how can the budget "run out of money" when there are all those hundreds of billions "left over"? This couldn't have anything to do with that tax cut, could it? ■


GLOBAL WARMING
SOLAR POWER IS JUST NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR, ALTHOUGH GIVEN A LITTLE MORE TIME...
CHENEY
NO HALF-BAKED STRATEGIES FOR US!
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White House Watch

Write Hand

By Ryan Lizza

Last Sunday's T-ball game on the White House South Lawn attracted at least a dozen members of President Bush's senior staff. Clustered behind home plate in their weekend casuals (press secretary Ari Fleischer in khakis, legislative affairs director Nick Calio in a bright green polo shirt), the giddy Bush aides cheered through an inning of toddler baseball. But one staffer not present to witness the president of the United States embrace the San Diego Chicken was Michael Gerson, Bush's chief speechwriter. Gerson had a prior engagement, but the truth is he doesn't like sports much anyway.

That Bush's top wordsmith doesn't share the president's passion for the national pastime isn't that surprising. Gerson, who, perhaps more than any other person, helped position Bush as a "compassionate conservative" during the campaign, has always seemed a bit out of place in the Bush team's sports-loving, nerd-hating milieu. But he's solved that problem by turning the speechwriting shop into an island of intellectualism, a kind of miniature think tank stocked with quirky conservatives who shape the White House's ideology as well as its rhetoric. And in doing so, he's making himself the most influential speechwriter in more than a generation.

By most accounts, Gerson is one of Bush's most prized advisers. "Bush personally chose him. Most presidents don't personally choose their writers," says one White House aide. This translates into access and authority that most recent speechwriters haven't enjoyed. Unlike many previous speechwriters, Gerson's office is in the West Wing of the White House, near the Oval Office, rather than at the Old Executive Office Building. Gerson also attends the daily 7:30 a.m. meeting of top Bush aides—a key indicator of White House clout.

In many ways, Gerson revives an earlier, higher-profile model of a speechwriter. "In pre-Nixon days," Carol Gelderman explains in *All the Presidents' Words*, her history of White House scribes, "speechwriters were a few close aides who had policy responsibilities and ready access to their presidents and for whom speechwriting was a secondary assignment." Up through LBJ's presidency, there was no formal office of speechwriting, as there is today. Franklin Roosevelt's wordsmith Samuel Rosenman, who coined the term "New Deal," had been a top Roosevelt adviser since FDR's days as governor of New York and wrote for him throughout his presidency. Theodore Sorensen worked for John Kennedy in the Senate and grew close enough to the president that he was at Kennedy's side through the entire Cuban missile crisis.

By contrast, ever since Nixon, speechwriters have perennially complained about being hired help. When William Safire offered a suggestion about Vietnam policy for a Nixon speech he was writing, he was removed from the assignment. Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan frequently complained about her second-class status. "If you think [Reagan] sounds stale, it's because the speechwriters haven't met with him in over a year," she once grumbled to a superior. During Bush I, writers took a pay cut, sat in the worst offices, were stripped of senior titles, and were even denied access to the White House mess. Noonan, who occasionally wrote for Bush, quipped to *The New York Times*, "[I]n terms of the political pecking order ... they are just above the people who clean up after Millie," Bush's dog.

Things are different in W.'s White House. "Neither Bush was a naturally articulate man. The elder Bush responded to his inarticulateness by denigrating the importance of words," explains one White House aide. "The son has responded to it by treating words with added respect." Bush has met at least twice with his entire speechwriting staff to give them an idea of what's on his mind. And while the president and others weigh in with ideas and edits, the speechwriters have some latitude to help craft Bush's agenda.

Gerson is the principal author of Bush's most important speeches (the Republican convention, the inaugural, the budget address to Congress). A self-described compassionate conservative, he was working on many of the ideas that now fall under that moniker as a Senate aide to Dan Coats in the mid-'90s. He sees compassionate conservatism as a way to reconcile what he considers the two most vital conservative intellectual traditions: libertarianism and Catholic social thought. While he didn't coin the phrase, he has thought through the oft-derided term more clearly than anyone else, including the president.

Like Gerson, the other speechwriters bring considerable intellectual heft, especially compared with the rest of the White House. David Frum, a smart conservative from *The Weekly Standard* whom Gerson brought in to write on economics, was the principal author of the president's little-noticed, but groundbreakingly harsh, criticism of the repression of religious liberties and human rights in China and Sudan, delivered to the American Jewish Committee last week. The idea for the speech was generated in Gerson's shop rather than by the National Security Council or the domestic policy team. Even after a cumbersome vetting process (during which four separate directorates of the NSC had to sign off on it), many of the ideas and strong language of the early drafts remained.

When putting together his shop, Gerson consciously picked writers with backgrounds in different strains of conservative thought. Frum is the libertarian. Peter Wehner, a former aide to Bill Bennett, is the neocon. Matthew Scully, a former reporter for *The Washington Times*, editor at *National Review*, and speechwriter for Dan Quayle, is also not a standard-issue conservative ideologue. His mentor was the late Bob Casey, the Democratic governor of Pennsylvania who opposed abortion and had serious qualms about the death penalty. Scully is a strict vegetarian (he even

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The Nation's Report Card in Peril

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d member, Hoover's
t Task Force on K–12
Education.

In April the nation learned that reading achievement among fourth-grade children has been stagnant since 1992. We also learned that the gap between the most successful and the least successful students was growing and that the poorest readers were performing even worse than they had in 1992.

The reason we know these things is because of a federally funded testing program called the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which has been testing national samples of American students since 1969 in subjects including reading, writing, mathematics, science, and history. In addition, NAEP has been testing state samples of students and reporting on how their performance has compared from state to state since 1990.

NAEP scores provide powerful information that influences state and national policies as well as decisions about public investment in education. **Unfortunately, Congress is about to act on legislation that could jeopardize the entire NAEP program.**

In the next several weeks, Congress will act on President George W. Bush's education plan. Bush wants the states to test every child in grades three through eight every year in reading and mathematics to see whether students are making progress or not. The states would get rewards or sanctions based on student achievement (or lack thereof).

The president proposed that states use a test of their choosing that produces comparable grade-by-grade results; he also recommended that states validate their claims by using the NAEP. At present, about forty states participate in NAEP and bear some of the costs. Bush would have the federal government pay for NAEP to be given to a sample of students in every state.

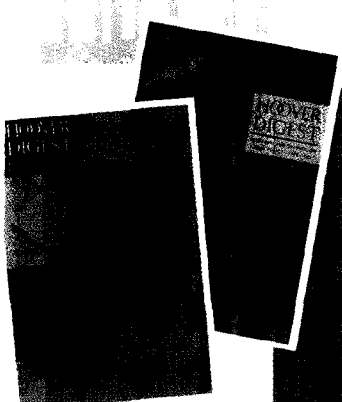
However, some in Congress insist that states should be free to get their second opinion from some nationally standardized test other than NAEP. If this provision passes, the NAEP testing program would be endangered. Because NAEP is more rigorous than most commercial tests, states would have good reason to shop around for an easier test. If significant numbers of states ceased participating in NAEP with congressional encouragement, NAEP would no longer have the data to report on state or national results. **The fact is that no other testing program is equal to NAEP as an external audit for the states.** Commercial test publishers sell their examination booklets to states and districts, where they are reused for several years until new editions are published. The administration and security of these testing programs are controlled by states and districts, not by an independent external organization.

Those who want states to have alternatives to NAEP say they are worried that the U.S. Department of Education might create a national curriculum. However, NAEP is controlled by a broad-based bipartisan governing board (the National Assessment Governing Board), not by the U.S. Department of Education. Congress created this governing board in 1988, when it authorized state-level administration of NAEP.

If Congress enacts legislation that inadvertently puts NAEP at risk, it would be a huge loss for the nation and for American education.

— Diane Ravitch

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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drinks soy milk) and is known in the White House for his passion for animal welfare, which he explains in some of the same moral language one finds in Bush's speeches on the "culture of life." Gerson brought him on board partly because of his ability to cast Bush's anti-abortion message in terms of social justice rather than in the fire-and-brimstone tone of the religious right. And perhaps Gerson's greatest achievement has been his ability (with Scully's help) to craft a social-policy language for Bush that touches evangelical hearts without alienating the suburban soccer moms and ethnic Catholics who react negatively to hard-edged culture-war rhetoric.

Together, Gerson and his brain trust serve as a sort of highbrow refuge within the administration's generally corporate landscape. To avoid the White House echo chamber, Gerson has begun a series of roundtable discussions with outside writers. The team has met with ethicist Leon R. Kass, columnist Charles Krauthammer, and THE NEW REPUBLIC's own Andrew Sullivan (in fact, all three are TNR contributors) for off-the-record sessions to discuss Bush and his administration. Papal biographer George Weigel is scheduled to drop by soon. The meetings are meant to re-energize the Bushies' thinking and give them a critical take on how they are doing. Some might snicker at the idea of conservatives like Sullivan and Krauthammer being considered critics, but, for this rather insular White House, it's not a bad start. ■

Why are pro-choicers declaring defeat?

Victim Politics

By MARCIA YABLON

TWO WEEKS AGO, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act—and panic ensued. "Truly, the right to choose has never been more imperiled than it is today," declared Vicki Saporta, executive director of the National Abortion Federation. "Make no mistake: This is an attack on a woman's right to chose," warned Representative Carolyn B. Maloney of New York. "We are in the midst of the greatest threat to *Roe* v. *Wade* since 1973," insisted Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood. All this in response to a bill that doesn't threaten the right to abortion at all. If anything, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act may actually strengthen it.

The act would make it a federal crime to harm a fetus while committing any of 68 federal offenses. Under current federal law, the penalty for assaulting a pregnant woman and injuring or killing her fetus is no greater than for assaulting a nonpregnant woman. Organizations like Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Federation agree that federal law should offer pregnant women more protection, but they oppose the Unborn Victims of Violence Act because they say that by legally enshrining fetal personhood it undermines *Roe* v. *Wade*. But that simply isn't true. Since the bill specifically exempts all forms of legal abortion, it leaves the constitutional rationale for the right to choose unaffected. According to Richard Parker, a professor of criminal law at Harvard University and a supporter of abortion rights, "There is nothing as a formal law that would undermine *Roe* v. *Wade*.... This is not at all a big deal." Indeed, 24 states already have similar laws, many of which use the same language as the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, and legally they don't affect the right to abortion in those states. Says Robert Weisberg, a criminal law professor at Stanford Law School, "This law is no different from the one here in California; it simply gets more attention because it is federal."

In fact, not only have many states passed legislation defining a fetus as a person—without legally threatening abortion rights—but so has the U.S. House of Representatives. Last year, the House unanimously passed the Innocent Child Protection Act, which stated that neither the state nor the federal government may "carry out a sentence of death on a woman while she carries a child in utero." The act employs the same definition of a child in utero as the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, defining it as "a member of the species of homo-sapiens, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb." And pro-choice groups didn't publicly object.

So why did last year's bill elicit nary a feminist peep, while this year's bill prompted a deafening roar? Perhaps because pro-life groups like the National Right to Life Committee pushed hard for the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, making it one of their top legislative priorities. But those groups readily acknowledge that the bill gets them no closer to banning abortion; they simply support it because they think it protects fetuses. Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee, says, "[T]his legislation is worthwhile in its own right. Although abortion is an important pro-life issue, it is not the only pro-life issue."

AFRAID THAT ANY pro-life victory constituted a pro-choice defeat, feminist groups supported an alternative bill. Introduced by Representative Zoe Lofgren, the Motherhood Protection Act would have increased the punishment for criminals who attack pregnant women but would not have charged them with murder even if their attack caused a woman to lose her fetus. The bill was eminently sensible; unfortunately, it had no chance of passing.

Faced, then, with either the Unborn Victims of Violence Act or nothing, many pro-choice members of Congress voted yes. One, Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina, says he told a pro-choice lobbyist before the vote: "[I]f I were in your position, I would call a press conference, and I would endorse this bill and [thereby] deny any victory for Lindsey Graham [the bill's sponsor] and his supporters." Indeed, many anti-abortionists themselves agree that by exempting all legal abortions from its list of crimes, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act strengthens *Roe*. "It is a reaffirmation of abortion," says Elizabeth Daub, director of youth activism for the American Life League. Even the more moderate National Right to Life League calls the bill pro-choice.

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In short, pro-choice activists could have endorsed the bill, enjoyed a public relations victory, and won some concrete protection for pregnant women—the constituency whose rights they've sworn to uphold—all while keeping *Roe* firmly intact. Instead, they composed hyperbolic declarations of defeat—declarations perfectly designed for their next round of fund-raising letters. It's no surprise that the pro-life movement wants to win America's decades-old abortion struggle. The puzzling question is why the pro-choice movement seems to want to lose. ■

Brunei Dispatch

Paradise Spent

By Joshua Kurlantzick

Brunei's Jerudong Park is one of the modern wonders of Southeast Asia. Located in a suburb of Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of this tiny state on the northern coast of Borneo, Jerudong is an immense amusement park, built by the sultan of Brunei to mark his forty-eighth birthday, full of roller coasters, exotic eateries, and hundreds of games. The park is set amid tropical gardens, the kind of lush, expensive greenery you'd expect to find in an oil-rich land that was once one of Asia's wealthiest countries.

These days, however, Jerudong is regularly shuttered; there aren't enough visitors to justify opening every day. And its closure is symbolic of the deep-rooted problems in Brunei, where you have only to scratch the gold-plated surface to find looming economic and social catastrophe.

Petroleum products account for 90 percent of Brunei's exports, and, largely because of the high price of oil, the country still boasts a relatively high standard of living. But Brunei's deposits are not endless. Already, the oil industry's imminent decline is pushing people out of jobs. Though Bandar's downtown still teems with Mercedeses, unemployed Bruneians have quietly started begging in the alleys. Even Brunei's monarch, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, is not immune from the economic downturn: His fortune was recently pegged at $23.7 billion, down from almost $42 billion in 2000. He has even begun hocking the royal family's possessions.

Brunei has enjoyed nearly a century of outrageous fortune. Since oil was first struck off the sultanate more than 70 years ago, turning an obscure backwater into a modern Shangri-la, Royal Dutch/Shell and Brunei's absolute monarchy have been pumping up to 350,000 barrels of oil and gas per day—no small amount in a country of roughly 300,000 people. Petroleum allowed the sultan to pamper his subjects with health care, no taxes, cushy government jobs, and a massive amusement park. Twenty years ago, thanks to oil, Brunei had the second-highest standard of living in Asia, as well as good relations with Malaysia, Indonesia, and the United States, even after an American beauty queen accused the sultan of abducting her to be his palace sex slave. (He denied the charge.)

But Shangri-la's time is up. In a strikingly candid report, the government's Economic Council recently announced that the country's petroleum reserves will run out by 2025. "The continued prosperity of Brunei Darussalam can no longer be taken for granted," the council warned. Though the government is offering new offshore blocks for exploration, there is little hope of striking sizable deposits. To make matters worse, since 1985 Brunei's population has been expanding at twice the rate of its economy.

Brunei also lacks an entrepreneurial class, the kind that in Dubai and Oman got rich off oil and then diversified into finance, petrochemicals, and other sectors. By contrast, roughly 75 percent of Brunei's workforce have jobs provided by the government and funded by oil; self-starters are rare. Stifling sociopolitical controls—the lone opposition party gets about 30 people at its meetings—further inhibit creative thinking.

The sultanate's royals have compounded its economic decline. The sultan has bought polo ponies, giant palaces, and a fleet of 350 Rolls-Royces. As chair of the state investment fund, Brunei Investment Agency (BIA), Hassanal's playboy brother, Prince Jefri Bolkiah, allegedly blew billions of government dollars (reports say $747,000 *per day*) on women, apartments for a staff of 4,000, and a 152-foot yacht he named "Tits." Jefri even reportedly paid Joe Montana and Herschel Walker thousands of dollars to give football lessons to his son.

Like the Persian Gulf states, Brunei is belatedly attempting to wean itself off black gold. But its prospects for diversification are not good. The Economic Council has recommended that Brunei position itself as a shipping and finance center and as a hub for regional tourism. Accordingly, Brunei has proposed building an expensive new port in its Maura district, but it will have a hard time competing with nearby Singapore, the second-largest port in the world. Similarly, bankers see no reason to move funds to Brunei from more developed financial hubs, and foreign investors are not enthralled by the sultanate. Tourism is a difficult sell since Brunei has few natural attractions, alcohol is illegal, and Muslim sex police occasionally break into hotel rooms to check on unmarried couples.

The sultan has responded to the revenue shortfall from declining oil supplies by enacting limited taxes, selling royal possessions, and even charging admission to Jerudong Park. But Bruneians still display a pervasive sense of entitlement: Although some 25 percent of secondary school graduates cannot find jobs, the state continues to import thousands of foreign workers since many Bruneians refuse to work in shops, food courts, and hotels.

Now unemployment is rising, drugs are appearing, and the letters to the *Borneo Bulletin*, the country's best-known newspaper, are turning increasingly bitter. The sultan

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seems aware of the danger of public dissatisfaction. Last year he sued his brother Jefri to stop him from wasting state funds, and in recent speeches he has expressed concern about unemployment. The sultan's own Economic Council report warned that "economic crisis could lead to social and political crisis."

But these changes are not enough. The sultan is not willing to relax his tight grip on power—he remains prime minister, defense minister, and finance minister—and the royal family refuses to present a budget or convene a parliament. And the sultan has settled with Jefri out of court, disappointing Bruneians who had hoped the playboy prince's case would help establish the rule of law. Sultan Hassanal should take notice: It will take law, accountability, and a solid Shellfare-to-work plan to keep Brunei even reasonably viable. Without these, its years of outrageously good fortune are almost certainly over. Better check out that amusement park while you still can. ■

What conservatives understand about taxes.

Going Stronger

By PETER BEINART

WHY ISN'T THERE a liberal Grover Norquist? Norquist runs a group called Americans for Tax Reform. But that's not his real job. His real job is to host a meeting every Wednesday that brings together every species of conservative—gun nuts, home schoolers, anti-environmentalists, capital gains tax cutters—to plot strategy. Why is this important? First, it keeps conservatives on-message. If the White House says America needs a tax cut because the economy is tanking (as opposed to last year, when it said America needed a tax cut because the economy wasn't tanking), Norquist's meeting makes sure everyone is reading from the same script. Second, Norquist's meeting facilitates inter-conservative back-scratching. It reminds UPS (to take a hypothetical example) to donate money to the Christian Coalition's gay-conversion program so the Christian Coalition will tell its members that federal ergonomics rules violate Judeo-Christian morality. But, most of all, the meeting helps the conservative movement set priorities. It's through Norquist's conclaves that conservatives learn that the White House isn't going to push for school vouchers, or an immediate increase in defense spending, or a loosening of the arsenic standard. And it's through them that conservatives disgruntled with those decisions are told to play along—or else.

One reason there isn't a liberal Grover Norquist is that Norquist is an unusual guy—shrewd, fanatically committed, catholic in his devotion to all right-wing causes, big and small. Another is that Norquist has access to money—from corporations looking for tax breaks or freedom from regulation—and that money gives him the leverage to keep fractious conservatives in line. Liberals don't have an activist of Norquist's stature and savvy. And given their often adversarial relationship to corporations—which provide most of the real money in politics—they don't have his finances, either. But there's a larger reason conservatives have produced a Grover Norquist and liberals haven't: Conservatives have a central, unifying purpose, and liberals, at least right now, do not.

A great deal of ink has been spilled in recent years on the crisis of post-cold-war conservatism. Conservatives no longer have the Soviet Union to define themselves against; they no longer have welfare; they no longer have soft-on-crime liberals. All that is true—but they still have taxes. Economic conservatives may hate taxes because they believe they undermine liberty, and social conservatives may hate taxes because they believe they undermine the family, but both groups hate them with a passion. Norquist understands this, and it's what holds his Wednesday meetings together. It's no coincidence, after all, that the man convening them is first and foremost an anti-tax crusader. His congregants know that while they may occasionally have to cave on education, the environment, or affirmative action, they will all go to the mat on taxes, and a victory on taxes will justify everything else. George W. Bush understands this too. He saw his father, the man who won the Gulf war and nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, nonetheless denounced by conservatives because of his apostasy in raising taxes. And W. has governed accordingly. The tax cut is his number-one priority; number two isn't even close.

THIS IS WHY Bush, and conservatives, are winning the tax cut battle: They care more. While support for tax cuts is clearly the top priority for conservatives, opposition to tax cuts isn't the top priority for liberals. Ralph Neas, director of People for the American Way, has gamely enlisted an array of liberal groups in a "Fair Taxes for All" coalition. But while Neas may be able to get lots of liberal organizations to say they oppose the tax cut, he can't get them to make it a priority. Feminist and civil rights groups are hoarding their resources for the fight over judicial nominations. Environmentalists have taken to the airwaves against Bush's environmental policy, not his budget. The AFL-CIO is more concerned about permanent normal trading relations with China, Bush's assault on ergonomics rules, and various anti-union guidelines instituted by the Labor Department. The Naderites care more about stopping the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

You can see the difference between conservative and liberal priorities in the recent budget votes in the House and Senate. Republicans who opposed the tax cut genuinely feared conservative retribution. And for good reason: As Michael Crowley reported in TNR ("Central Casting," May 14), the Norquist-allied Club for Growth threatened to back primary challengers against GOP moderates who didn't support the president. The result was that every single House Republican voted for Bush's tax cut, and the three Senate Republicans who didn't were the subjects of attack ads in their home states. By contrast, House and Senate Democrats who defected from their party's position to support the tax cut

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feared—and received—no such retaliation.

You could make a case that taxes shouldn't be the top liberal priority of the Bush era. Or, at least, you could make a case if you had a good alternative. But liberals don't. The alternative favored by culture-war liberals, as far as I can tell, is the judiciary. Last month 42 of the 50 Senate Democrats participated in a retreat at which feminists, civil rights leaders, and academics rallied them against Bush's impending nominations to the courts. (As far as I know, liberals never held a similar event on the tax cut.) Fights over judges are really proxies for fights over abortion and affirmative action. But there's simply no way those identity-politics battles can serve as liberalism's overriding purpose, because they hold little or no appeal to that large chunk of the left motivated by economics. Unlike tax cuts, they are inherently parochial. The alternative focus suggested by the economic left—globalization—is even worse. The unions were clearly more galvanized by the NAFTA and fast-track fights than they are by the tax cut; and, by sinking Al Gore, the Naderites made it clear they considered his support for free trade more significant than his opposition to tax giveaways for the wealthy. To the extent it is allowed to define left-liberal politics, the anti-globalization movement will wreak political disaster and moral catastrophe. And it will alienate upper-middle-class pro-choicers as much as abortion rights alienates blue-collar hard hats.

Grover Norquist is right: Taxation, defined broadly to encompass government redistribution of wealth, is the central political question of the moment. A tax cut as large as Bush's effectively predetermines how government will (or will not) respond to a vast array of other issues—entitlements, defense policy, environmental regulation, health care, education, welfare, you name it. Conservatives understand this. Liberals, for the most part, don't. And that's why conservatives are winning. ■

The Bush tax cut is a lie, Part I.

Going for Broke

By PAUL KRUGMAN

IN THE WORLD according to George W. Bush, there is plenty of money available for a tax cut. When the president presented his tax plan to Congress, he claimed we could afford his entire tax cut and still set aside a "trillion-dollar contingency fund" for unforeseen events. (The actual number was $842 billion, but who's counting?) But the nonpartisan Concord Coalition finds that the Bush tax cut would use all the available surplus, leaving no margin for error. Other estimates suggest that with proper accounting, even the somewhat smaller tax cut agreed upon by Congress would put the United States in the red by $1 trillion or more.

What we have here is a yawning chasm between perceptions. Call it the "Bush gap." That gap is the difference between the administration and its critics—and the critics are right. In fact, the administration surely knows they are right. The fiscal predictions that enable Bush to pay for his tax cut and contingency fund are not mere errors but deliberate efforts to deceive the public. The Bush administration understands better than anyone that if its math were honest, its tax cut could never pass.

The Bush gap consists of three parts. First, the budget projections on which the administration's numbers are based are misleading: Although they purport to show the surplus that will materialize under "current policy," they do no such thing. Second, the administration underestimates the size of the surplus we *ought* to be running to meet our coming Social Security and Medicare obligations. And, finally, the administration lowballs the budgetary impact of the tax cut itself.

First, the surplus. The debate over tax cuts has been framed not in terms of this year's surplus, or even next year's, but in terms of projected surpluses over the next decade—in particular, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projection of a $5.6 trillion surplus over that period. Rather than focus on the rather impressive bird in the hand, we are counting on a couple dozen birds still in the bush.

This focus on the ten-year surplus is extremely unfortunate because ten years is just about the worst planning horizon possible—too long for accuracy, too short for completeness. If I could get away with it, I would refuse to discuss tax cut plans in terms of a ten-year prospect. But because everyone talks about them that way, there's nothing I can do.

What does it mean, then, when the CBO "projects" a surplus of $5.6 trillion over the next ten years? To begin with, it doesn't mean we will actually run that surplus, even if the economic assumptions turn out to be exactly on target. Since the CBO isn't in the business of political forecasting, its projections don't try to anticipate what politicians will do in the future. Instead, it writes its projections in the subjunctive: It estimates what the surplus would be, given likely economic trends, *if policies were to remain unchanged*. Or, as it is sometimes put, the projection is an estimate of what the surplus would be under "current policy."

Current policy is relatively easy to define when it comes to revenue projections: You just predict how much revenue

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would come in if current tax law remained in effect. Defining current policy on entitlements, mainly Social Security and Medicare, is also fairly straightforward. We know what the law says retirees are entitled to receive; so if you can make economic projections about things like health care costs (a very big "if"), you can make a spending projection based on the assumption that the law remains unchanged.

Where it gets really tricky is defining current policy for the rest of government spending—the discretionary part of the budget. The way the CBO defines "maintaining current policy" is to assume that there is *no change in real discretionary spending*. That is, it assumes that keeping unchanged the role of government would mean keeping unchanged the number of dollars spent on things other than Social Security and Medicare (after adjusting for inflation).

To understand why this is an unreasonable way to define current policy, consider one government program: air traffic control. Suppose the federal government were to keep real spending on air traffic control constant for the next ten years so that the number of controllers and the capacity of the radar systems stayed the same for a decade. Would that *feel* like no change in policy? Of course not. It would feel like a drastic cut, because the same number of air traffic controllers would have to manage a greatly increased volume of air traffic. And air traffic is not a special case. Just about everything that the government deals with will require more resources in order to maintain the current level of government services, because we are a nation with a growing population and a growing economy.

Even a highly conservative definition of maintaining current policy would be one under which real spending *per capita* remains unchanged. Because the U.S. population is expected to grow about 10 percent over the next decade, the CBO's projection assumes a 10 percent *decline* in real per capita spending. Many economists would go further and argue that a truly reasonable definition of unchanged policy would be one in which spending remained constant as a percentage of GDP; by contrast, the CBO projection assumes roughly a 25 percent decline in that percentage. The important and obvious point is that the CBO's projection isn't a description of what the budget surplus would be under current policy. It's a projection of what the budget surplus would be if government programs were cut radically—to levels not seen since the 1950s or earlier. That may be what some politicians want, but it is certainly not how the public interprets the CBO's projections. And, of course, none of the CBO's spending figures include any of the big-ticket budget items the White House is said to favor—from bolstering the military budget (including the cost of a missile defense system), to increased education spending, to a prescription-drug benefit for the elderly.

MOREOVER, THE CBO'S definition of current policy doesn't only result in unreasonably low projections of future spending; it also results in unreasonably high projections of future revenue. On taxes, the CBO's approach is strict literalism: It assumes that no new tax laws will be passed—including laws that simply renew tax breaks or adjust taxes for changes in the cost of living. In particular, the CBO assumes that a hitherto obscure aspect of the tax code, the alternative minimum tax (AMT), will be left unchanged. Put into effect in 1969, the AMT was intended to prevent a small percentage of wealthy taxpayers from using loopholes to pay little or no income tax. Today, about 1.5 million people pay this tax. But, unlike income tax brackets, which are adjusted yearly for inflation, the criteria under which the AMT applies are not. Consequently, the tax will soon start to affect far more taxpayers—as many as 21 million by 2011. We can safely predict that this is not going to happen—that Congress will, one way or another, adjust the AMT to prevent it from becoming a widespread burden on the upper-middle class. If current policy is redefined to mean adjusting the AMT and renewing expiring tax breaks, that subtracts more than $200 billion from the CBO's revenue projections.

So what is a reasonable projection of the budget surplus under "current policy"? Alan Auerbach and William Gale of the Brookings Institution have calculated that even if you take a very conservative view of what it means to maintain current policy—keeping the tax system unchanged de facto, as opposed to de jure, and keeping real spending per capita constant—the CBO's surplus projection drops by $700 billion, from $5.6 trillion to $4.9 trillion. If you make the more realistic supposition that maintaining current policy means keeping the share of spending in GDP unchanged, that projection drops to $4.3 trillion.

I am even more downbeat than Auerbach and Gale because I think the CBO is also overestimating likely capital gains taxes—which have been swollen in recent years because of the late, lamented bull market. I would argue that a reasonable surplus projection under "current policy" is actually below $4 trillion. To be sure, we're still talking about a big surplus. But not when you consider how much we need to save to meet our future obligations.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE of sound long-run tax policy is simple: The government should avoid moving tax rates up and down over time. A steady tax rate of 20 percent is better than a rate that is sometimes 10 percent and sometimes 30 percent, even if the average tax rate over time is the same, because the losses government inflicts on the economy when it raises the tax rate from 20 percent to 30 percent are bigger than the gains it realizes when it cuts the tax rate from 20 percent to 10 percent.

But while there are good reasons to keep tax rates more or less the same from year to year, there are also good reasons why government spending is *not* the same from year to year. Sometimes government incurs extraordinary expenses—of which the most important historically has been war. So how do you reconcile the goal of steady taxes with the need to vary spending? The answer is that during "bad" years, when there are exceptional spending needs, the government should run a budget deficit; during "good" years, the government should save for the future by running surpluses. In the past, responsible governments ran budget deficits in wartime, creating large debts, then paid off those debts during peacetime.

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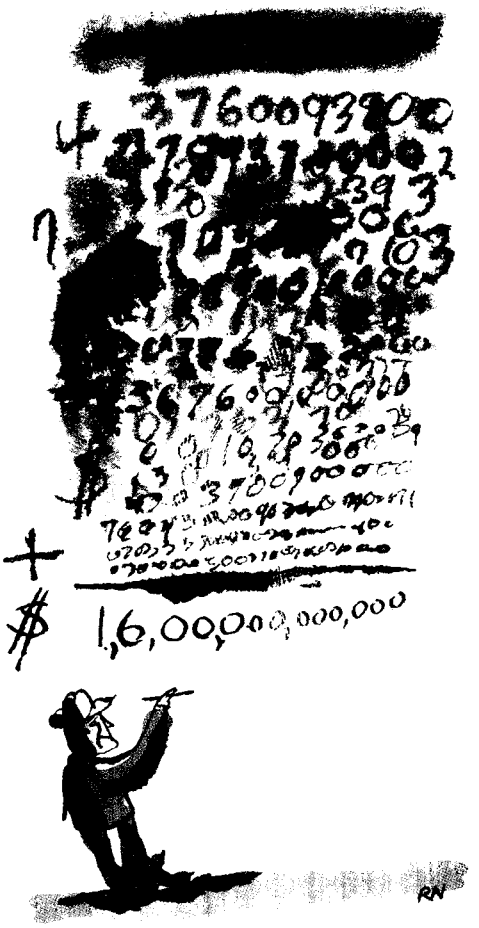
But modern America isn't mainly a military state; it is mainly a retirement state in which the budget is dominated by programs for retirees. The basic reason America needs a large budget surplus right now is that while we are currently enjoying "good" years, we know that some "bad" ones are down the road, when the population's age distribution is going to be much less favorable. We are in the position of a healthy middle-aged couple, in our late forties or early fifties, at the peak of our earning power. That couple ought to be saving for retirement. And the federal government should similarly be saving for the retirement of the baby-boomers.



How much should we be saving? One thing is for sure: The minimum prudent federal surplus over the next decade is $3.3 trillion. That number is a projection of the combined surplus that will be run by all of the federal government's retirement trust funds. Social Security is the biggest of those funds, but it's not the whole story. There's also Medicare, which, like Social Security, is a program for retirees and is currently running surpluses for the same reason. And finally—something that is usually ignored but should be considered in the same class—there are federal pension funds that owe benefits to both military and civilian retirees.

Why should the overall surplus be no less than the combined surplus of the trust funds? Or, to use Washington jargon, why should we put those trust-fund surpluses in a "lockbox"? First, because we know that the projected surpluses in Social Security and Medicare, though enough to postpone the eventual crises in the two systems, are not enough to put off those crises forever. Medicare, in particular, will run out of money sometime around 2029. So, even taking the Social Security and Medicare systems as they are, extending their life would require some additional "topping up" from the rest of the federal budget.

Second, there is a good case for reforming Social Security—turning it into something more like a fully funded pension system for the middle class. I won't go into the economics of that case here, except to say that it is widely accepted among economists that Social Security, whatever its virtues, discourages private saving and thus ultimately acts as a drag on economic growth. The relevant point for this discussion is that any reform of Social Security will require additional money *over and above the system's projected surplus*, because any reform would involve paying off some of the system's huge implicit debt. That is, Social Security reform would require using part of the non-Social Security surplus to help out the Social Security system. Here, by the way, is one instance where the administration's rhetoric is simply Orwellian. Again and again we hear that, by allowing young workers to put some of their payroll taxes into private investment accounts, we can "save Social Security." In fact, such accounts will *undermine* Social Security, because the benefits owed to older Americans must be paid out of those same taxes. If you want to partially privatize the Social Security system, you need *more* tax revenue, not less.

At minimum, then, a responsible policy would be to consider the Social Security, Medicare, and pension-fund surpluses off-limits, not available for tax cuts or new spending. So over the next decade the federal government ought to run a surplus of at least the $3.3 trillion projected by the trust funds.

Bush begs to differ. He is willing to put Social Security in a lockbox (although he also wants to partially privatize the system, without explaining where the additional money would come from). Crucially, however, the administration has systematically—and without explanation—refused to protect other retirement trust funds, Medicare in particular. This last point needs some explanation, because the administration has prepared a specious but cleverly confusing defense involving the definition of Medicare.

It turns out that, officially, Medicare consists of two programs. Part A, hospital insurance, is the program paid for with the Medicare portion of the payroll tax; it is also the part of the program that is running a surplus, in preparation for the retirement of the baby-boomers. Part B, supplementary medical insurance, is paid for by a mix of fees from Medicare recipients and general tax revenues. Part A has a trust fund; Part B does not. So Part B, although it is run by the Medicare system, is really part of the non-Medicare budget.

The Bush program calls for diverting some of the payroll taxes that have until now been reserved for Part A, and have been used to accumulate a trust fund, to pay for current Part B expenses. By reducing the amount of general revenue needed to support Part B, this would free up money for tax cuts. This is, in effect, a raid on the Medicare trust fund: Every dollar diverted from Part A to Part B is one fewer dollar saved to deal with the future medical expenses of the baby-boomers. Technically the administration can say, and has said, that Medicare funds are being used only for Medicare. But the important point is that funds that were supposed to be set aside to provide for future Medicare recipients are instead being used to make room in the budget for tax cuts. If you find it hard to believe that the leaders of a great nation would resort to such tricks—well, you just don't understand how important it is to get that tax cut.

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Which brings us to how much the tax cut will really cost. During the campaign, the plan was billed as costing $1.3 trillion, though upon closer inspection that number gradually rose to $1.6 trillion. The House and Senate now seem prepared to approve a $1.35 trillion "compromise" plan, though its exact contours are still unclear.

But, whatever the final figure, the headline numbers are almost certain to systematically understate the plan's impact on the budget. One key issue, though one the media has never done a good job of reporting, is that a dollar of tax cuts, in general, is considerably more than a dollar deducted from those ten-year surplus projections. The reason is that if that dollar of surplus is used not to pay off debt, the government's interest payments in future years will be higher than they would have been otherwise.

Interest cost is another issue the administration has done a remarkably good job of obscuring; it has continued to discuss the president's proposal as a $1.6 trillion tax cut. When submitting budget plans to Congress, however, the administration cannot simply pretend the interest cost isn't there. These plans show that when you include the impact of tax cuts on interest payments, that $1.6 trillion cut actually consumes about $2 trillion of the projected surplus. And congressional staffers keep revising up that number. At the time of this writing, the likely cost of the Bush plan is probably at least $2.2 trillion, and, the way things are going, further examination will likely turn up a few hundred billion more in hidden costs. While a $1.35 trillion compromise could bring down those numbers somewhat, hidden costs and interest payments probably still mean a true cost of more than $1.8 trillion.

And then there is the alternative minimum tax. We've already seen that the AMT is a looming problem under current tax law. But if the Bush tax cut is enacted, many more well-off (but not rich) people will see their tax burdens fall so low that they'll qualify for the punitive AMT. In March, the bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation estimated that, under the Bush plan, *one in three* taxpayers would be subject to the AMT.

This isn't going to happen. It is certain that, long before the AMT became an issue for all those people, the tax plan would be "fixed" to solve the problem. Notice that this is a fix over and above the fix needed to prevent the AMT from becoming a mass issue under *current* tax law. The Joint Committee on Taxation has estimated, with the spurious precision typical of this subject, that the cost of this fix would be $292 billion.

So a *conservative* estimate (that's financial conservatism, not political) of the ten-year budget cost of the Bush tax cut is $2.5 trillion; even with the compromise plan it would still probably end up at more than $2 trillion.

Where does this leave us? A reasonable projection suggests that the surplus is certainly less than $5 trillion—and that's without missile defense or a prescription-drug benefit or a "contingency fund." A responsible target for the surplus is at least $3.3 trillion. And Bush is proposing a tax cut of $2 trillion to $2.5 trillion. Put it all together, and you have a Bush gap of several hundred billion dollars, probably much more. More than that, you have a budget plan shocking in its dishonesty—the outrageous duplicity over Medicare being only the worst example.

In the end, maybe the "honesty gap" is more important than the fiscal gap. The Bush tax plan is irresponsible, but America will surely survive it, just as we survived the Reagan tax cut. What is different this time is the utter dishonesty of the sales campaign. At every stage in this debate, Bush and his people have tried to obscure what they were really proposing. They have radically understated the cost of their plan, while overstating the money available to pay that cost. They have pretended that a plan that mainly cuts the taxes of the extremely well-off is basically a middle-class tax cut, and have misrepresented the size of the tax cut that middle-income families will actually receive. And they have falsely sold the plan as an appropriate answer to a short-run economic slowdown, when it is almost perfectly designed *not* to deal with that sort of problem.

No previous administration has tried to sell its economic plans on such false pretenses. And this from a man who ran for president on a promise to restore honor and integrity to our nation's public life. ■

The Bush tax cut is a lie, Part II.

Going for Gold

By JONATHAN CHAIT

THE DEBATE OVER the Bush tax cut has been shrouded in a fog of cant and untruth. But every so often the fog clears, just for a moment. One such moment occurred in early March, when the Republican leadership in Congress held a rally in support of the president's tax cut. As is often the case with such events, the rally organizers needed bodies as a backdrop, a visual cue indicating the support of the populace. And so they contacted Washington's business lobbies, many of whom have pledged themselves to the tax cut effort. But the congressional leadership understood that a visual backdrop of Armani-clad corporate lobbyists was not exactly the message it wanted to send. And so it put out word, in a memo circulated among the business lobbies and later

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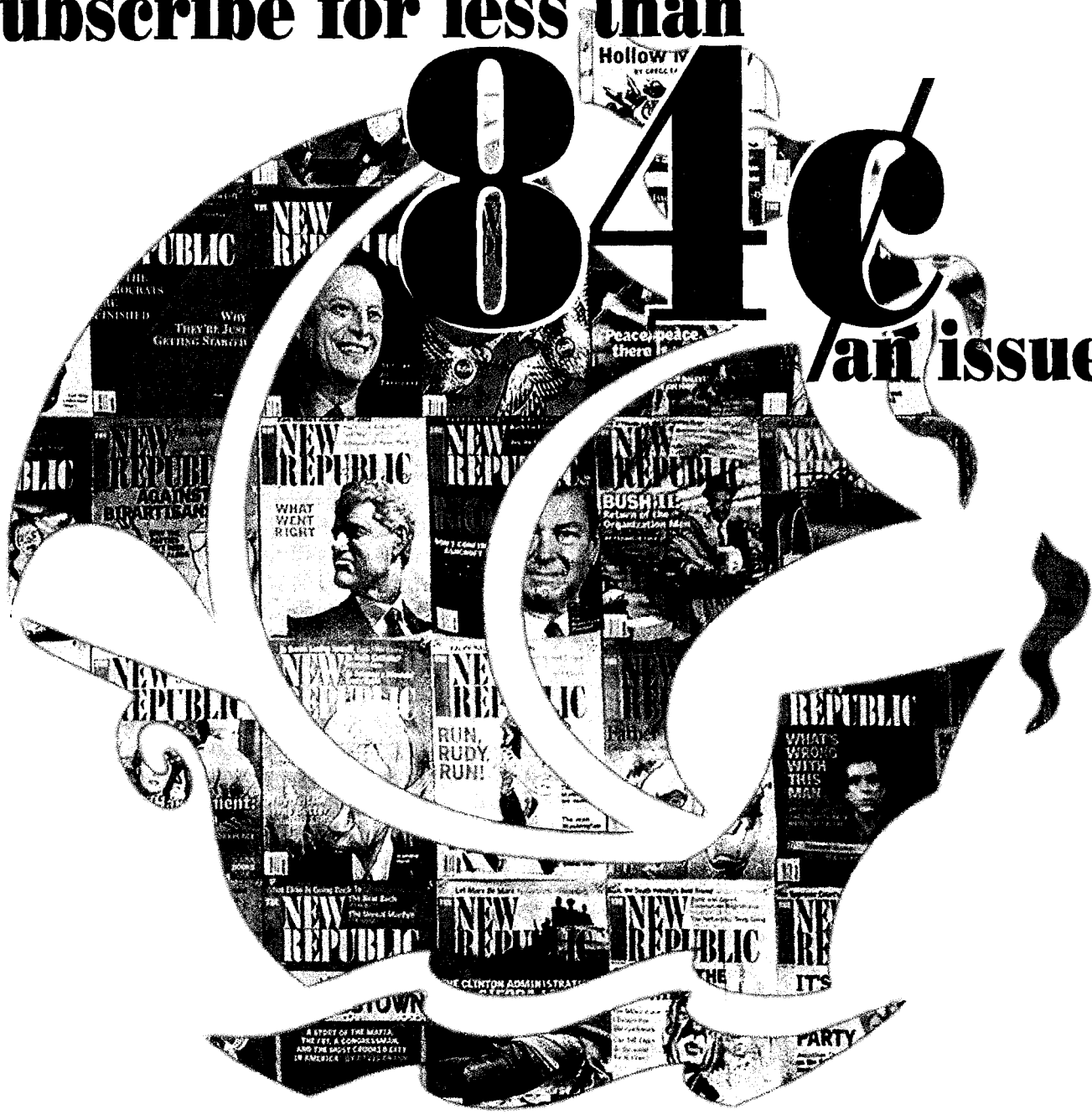

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obtained by *The Washington Post*, that some sartorial changes were in order. "The theme involves working Americans ...," the memo instructed. "[T]he Speaker's office was very clear in saying that they do not need people in suits. If people want to participate—AND WE DO NEED BODIES—they must be DRESSED DOWN, appear to be REAL WORKER types, etc. We plan to have hard hats for people to wear. Other groups are providing waiters/waitresses, and other types of workers."

If the advocates of the Bush tax cut were honest, a memo like this would not exist. They would insist that wing-tipped representatives of corporate America deserve a tax cut just as much as construction workers do—indeed, since they contribute more to federal coffers, they deserve one even more. But the tax cut's proponents realize that their perspective is not broadly shared. Indeed, the memo's author considers the public so class-conscious that it perceives "working Americans" as a social type distinct from, and morally superior to, "people in suits."

And so the tax cut's advocates have produced a series of distortions, misrepresentations, and outright lies intended to convince Americans that the tax cut primarily benefits the poor and the middle class, or at least to demonize those who would suggest otherwise. It's important to expose those distortions, but it's even more important to understand that they are not the tax cutters' real argument. Their deeper argument—which goes largely unspoken—is that government should not, by rights, help the poor and the middle class at the expense of the rich. That is the larger debate that should frame the struggle over the president's tax cut. And it's the one the cut's architects are determined not to allow.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, President Bush has sold his tax cut by insisting that it would primarily help society's less fortunate. In 1999, when he announced his plan, Bush declared, "Let's start where the need is greatest: with social mobility for hard-working American families." During the campaign, he affirmed that "by far the vast majority of my tax cuts go to the bottom end of the spectrum." And lately, if you listen to the president defend his tax cut, you can almost hear an echo of Huey Long. In a recent speech, Bush noted that workers earning $22,000 a year face a higher marginal tax rate than workers who earn ten times as much. "[S]omebody struggling to get ahead, somebody working the hardest job in America, pays a higher marginal rate than successful folks, Wall Street bankers," he bemoaned. "And that's not right. And that's not fair."

In this ocean of malarkey, there is a drop of truth. It is true that many low-income workers face something *resembling* high marginal tax rates. That's because the federal government offers certain benefits to the poor—wage supplements, food stamps, and so on—and these benefits are gradually phased out for workers above the poverty line. This phase-out works like a tax: For every dollar you earn, the government reduces your subsidy a little bit.

But that doesn't mean it *is* a tax. And that's why Bush's solution does almost nothing for the working poor. All it does is reduce income taxes, of which low-paid workers pay little or none at all. Bush's favorite example of who would benefit from his tax cut—repeated countless times over the last 18 months—is a single waitress with two kids who earns around $20,000 per year. "Under my plan," he likes to boast, the waitress "will pay no income tax at all." That's true. Because the waitress *almost certainly doesn't pay any income taxes to begin with.* (The only exception would be if she had no child care expenses at all—unlikely for a working single mother of two—in which case she would owe no more than $120.) It is typical of the duplicity Bush has brought to the subject that the people whom he claims would benefit most from his tax cut would not, in many cases, benefit at all.

When pressed on this, the White House has responded with a shrug. "If you don't pay taxes," sighs Larry Lindsey, Bush's main economic adviser and the ghostwriter of his tax plan, "it's very hard to get a tax cut." But this is another deception—while low-income workers may not owe income taxes, they do owe payroll taxes. Nearly 80 percent of the workforce, in fact, owes more in payroll taxes than in income taxes. If Bush truly wanted to help the working poor get ahead, he would propose cutting payroll taxes. But these are among the few federal taxes Bush has shown no interest in cutting.

Conservatives argue that, if we cut payroll taxes, the Social Security trust fund (which payroll taxes finance) would go broke sooner. That problem can be easily finagled, though, by making up the gap with surplus income tax revenues. Some worry that using income taxes to finance Social Security, which has never been done before, would undermine it. But income taxes already help support Medicare, and this fact has hardly rendered the program unpopular.

THE REAL REASON Bush isn't helping the working poor is that he doesn't want to. By this I don't mean just that his administration doesn't want to waste scarce surplus dollars on the poor that could be more usefully given to the rich, although that's probably true as well. What I mean is that Republicans actively desire that the tax burden of the poor *not* be alleviated. Why not? Because they believe, with some justification, that as taxes on the middle and lower classes fall, government seems like a better and better deal to these voters, turning them into Democrats. Conservatives whisper fearfully of this prospect. "With the lower- to middle-income taxpayers paying so little," a spokesman for the conservative Tax Foundation told *The Washington Post* last year, "there won't be pressure" for tax cuts. Before Bush unveiled his tax cut plan, *National Review* explained why he should avoid cutting taxes for low-income workers. "Taking still more people off the tax rolls might look good today," the conservative organ advised, "but it creates political headaches tomorrow: People who pay next to nothing for big government are easy pickings for the tax-and-spend party." The calculation here is almost admirably devious. On one hand, Republicans need to promise working stiffs a tax cut to win their votes; but they must never actually deliver on this promise, because then the stiffs would cease to vote Republican. As the example of the waitress making $20,000 per year illustrates, Bush has straddled this dilemma skillfully, claiming that he is

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wiping out the tax bills for low-income workers while actually doing nothing for them at all.

A corollary of Bush's false assertion that his tax cut would help everyone, but especially the poor, is that the Democrats' proposals might help the poor but wouldn't help every one else. "To me, the best tax policy is to treat everybody fairly and to say if you pay taxes, you get relief," the president likes to declare. But the corollary is wrong as well. Democratic proposals do give tax relief to everyone. For low-income workers who owe payroll taxes but not income taxes, the Democrats (unlike Bush) offer tax credits. And for everyone else, including the wealthiest Americans, the Democrats offer—yes—an income tax cut. One Democratic scheme would confine its income tax cuts to the lowest tax rate, and news reports often state, erroneously, that this would help only the lower and middle classes. That's not true: Even if you're in the top tax bracket, you pay the top rate on only the portion of your income above about $300,000 per year. Below that level, your income is taxed at lower rates. This means that all income taxpayers pay the lowest rate on at least some of their income, and cutting that lowest rate would benefit them all. So Bush's line is a complete inversion of the truth: *Democrats* are the ones who give a break to every taxpayer, and *Bush* is the one who leaves some out.

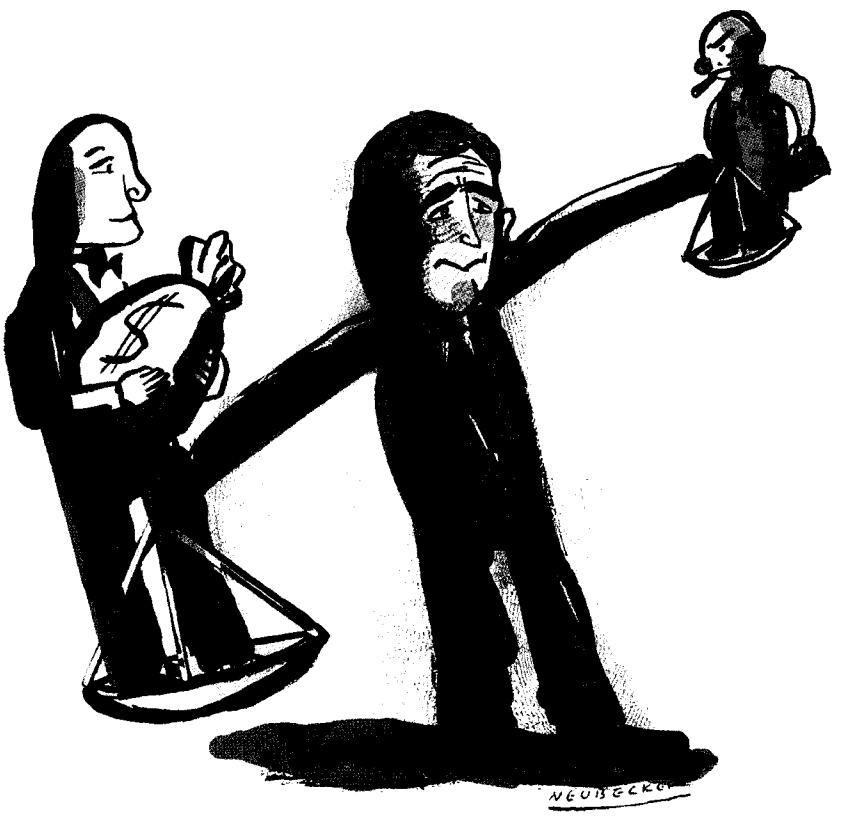
BUT THE WHITE HOUSE has not relied solely on a pseudo-populist rationale for the tax cut. It has also devised a pseudo-economic rationale: The tax cut is needed to get the economy out of a recession. "[T]here are some clear warning signs," Bush declared ominously in December, "warning signs that will require what we believe is important action in the halls of Congress, such as tax relief."

This line has a veneer of plausibility—there are circumstances in which a certain kind of tax cut can stimulate consumer spending and help avert a slowdown. But Bush's tax cut, designed while the economy was still booming, is exactly the wrong kind to do this. If you want tax cuts to stimulate the economy, you need something quick and targeted at the poor, the group most likely to spend its windfall rather than save it. The Bush tax cut, by contrast, is slow and accrues mostly to the rich. In any case, most contemporary economists are skeptical of using tax cuts for short-term stimulus—conservative economists especially so. It seems virtually certain that none of Bush's economic advisers believe the tax cut will stop a recession.

What they do believe is that cutting taxes will boost economic growth in the long run. The theory underpinning this belief is supply-side economics—the hoary notion that cutting tax rates for the rich can have massively beneficial results that trickle down to one and all. The Bushies don't advertise their affinity for supply-side theory. But Lindsey is a longtime supply-side defender, and the tax cut has the classic supply-side focus of cutting marginal tax rates. In the popular imagination, supply-side economics is associated with the 1980s, but, in truth, its grip on the GOP is stronger now than ever. Twenty years ago, traditional fiscal conservatives had enough clout in the party to convince Ronald Reagan to take back a portion of his tax cuts in 1982, and ten years ago they persuaded the previous President Bush to raise taxes as part of a deficit-cutting deal. But today this once-proud wing of the party has been reduced to a handful of Northeastern holdovers who barely manage a whisper of dissent.

The triumph of supply-side thinking in the GOP has taken place, curiously enough, just as any intellectual basis for the theory has collapsed. All economists, of course, understand that high tax rates can distort people's behavior in ways that dampen their productivity. The distinguishing characteristic of the supply-siders is that they believe this effect is so important that almost nothing else matters. This allows them to argue for upper-bracket tax cuts from distinctly nonplutocratic premises. If the top tax rate was cut, they once claimed, incomes would rise across the board, and, with them, tax revenues, permitting more spending as well. "To help the poor and middle class," wrote George Gilder in *Wealth and Poverty*, the preeminent supply-side tract, "one must cut the taxes of the rich."

Whatever the general truth of their argument, the early '80s offered the most favorable economic environment for supply-side claims. When Reagan became president, the top statutory tax rate stood at an imposing 70 percent. If 70 cents of the next $1 you earn is going to be taken away, you have a



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reasonably strong incentive to find a loophole or tax shelter, or otherwise devote your time and resources in ways that aren't especially productive. Today, the top rate stands at 40 percent. Whether or not you believe high tax rates depressed the economy 20 years ago, the case for that view is far weaker today. Meanwhile, enough time has passed since the 1980s for academic economists to reach a rough consensus on the effect of tax cuts. Their conclusion is that, while high taxes may encourage tax shelters and other paper-shuffling, they don't do much to discourage people from working.

But far more important than those theoretical insights into the validity of the supply-side argument has been the empirical evidence of the 1990s. When President Clinton increased the top income tax rate by more than one-quarter in 1993, supply-siders unanimously predicted disaster. "There is no question," wrote economist and GOP adviser Lawrence Kudlow in *The Wall Street Journal*, "that President Clinton's across-the-board tax increases ... will throw a wet blanket over the recovery and depress the economy's long-run potential to grow." This was not merely hyperbole intended to sink a Democratic president. It was an unavoidable conclusion of conservative economic dogma. If supply-side theory has any merit at all, then an upper-income tax hike of the magnitude proposed by Clinton must, at the very least, drag the economy far below its potential.

But the results of the last eight years are as if the economic gods had determined to disprove supply-side economics forever. Not only did the economy grow much faster than anticipated, but it did so in ways that specifically seemed to mock every notion the supply-siders held dear. They believed higher taxes on the rich would suppress their entrepreneurial and innovative vigor, and that tax receipts from the rich would fall as they sheltered their income. Of course, tax receipts from the rich skyrocketed. And, needless to say, higher taxes did not seem to discourage anybody from getting rich in innovative or entrepreneurial ways.

The implications for the future could not be more clear. The Bush tax cut is essentially an attempt to roll back the Clinton tax hike. It is therefore logically and necessarily true that if you believe the Bush tax cut will help the economy, you must believe that the Clinton tax hike hurt the economy. Since it demonstrably did not, we can be pretty sure the Bush tax cut will do little good for the economy, and, by precluding other economically efficient uses of the surplus (like debt reduction and education spending), it may well do real harm.

HOW COULD EVIDENCE as devastating to their theory as the Clinton boom leave conservatives so undaunted? Perhaps because the argument that supply-side tax cuts help the economy, like the argument that tax cuts help the poor and the middle class, is not their deepest one. They may believe it, but they don't need to believe it in order to want to cut taxes. The deepest argument for the Bush tax cut is not distributional or economic, but moral: The rich should have their taxes cut because they deserve it. Giving away some people's money to others in an effort to improve society is simply wrong.

Bush doesn't put it this way, of course. But he sets out a series of convictions that lead inescapably to reducing the taxes of the rich. For instance, he frequently insists that "the federal government should take no more than a third of anybody's income." Republicans came upon this principle recently when they discovered that most people don't realize the top tax rate is higher than that, and they have taken to it with a moralistic fervor. "President Bush," writes Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, "is correct to say that for the government to confiscate more than a third of a citizen's goods is wrong, unjust, unfair, and thoroughly immoral."

As a principle, this is confused. According to what theory is a 34 percent tax rate "unjust" while a 33 percent tax rate is not? No doubt the American Enterprise Institute has its moral philosophers researching a clearer elucidation of this principle. But even if we accept the 33 percent maxim, it doesn't necessarily mean what Bush says it does. Bush conflates *marginal* tax rates with the *total* tax rate. Even if you pay close to 40 percent on your last dollar, you pay much less than that on your first $300,000 of income or so—meaning your total share is probably under one-third. (The richest 1 percent pay, on average, one-quarter of their earnings in federal income taxes.) On the other hand, this formulation ignores the effects of all other taxes—payroll, state, local, and so on. If you include all those taxes, the average tax rate for *lots* of people—most of them not upper-income—rises well above one-third. So, whatever Bush means by this line, it is not a reason to cut the top rate to 33 percent.

BUSH ALSO ECHOES a favorite GOP line that the budget surplus constitutes an "overcharge" that must be returned to the taxpayers, in the same way that a restaurant would be obliged to give you a refund if it miscalculated your bill. This suggests some interesting implications. One is that it is inherently immoral to pay down the national debt. Another is that a budget deficit—should one reappear—constitutes an "undercharge" and is thus proof of the need for a tax increase. The main point of this silly analogy, of course, is to make tax-cutting seem like a foreordained conclusion (Oops! Overcharged ya—here's your refund!) rather than a conscious democratic choice, to be weighed against alternatives, such as paying down the debt or expanding health care coverage.

Another backdoor way of saying that taxing the rich is immoral is Bush's insistence that tax cuts should go to "the folks who pay the bills." It's a clever formulation. To most people it sounds as if he's talking about hard-pressed middle-class taxpayers trying to make their mortgage payments. But what Bush really means is that the surplus should be returned to taxpayers in the same proportion in which they contributed to it. Since he excludes the Social Security surplus, which is funded by regressive payroll taxes, what he really means is that income taxes must be reduced by the same proportion in which they are raised: If Bill Gates pays 10,000 times as much income tax as I do, he deserves a tax cut 10,000 times larger. But this is another social choice—if we are to have a huge tax cut, we could just as easily give it disproportionately to the middle class—that Bush's language is intended to make seem ineluctable.

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THE HIDDEN PREMISE underlying Bush's rhetoric is that market outcomes represent a morally ideal distribution of income. This idea pops up regularly in the conservative press. "Mr. Bush's impulse to return that surplus to all those who have created it," editorialized *The Wall Street Journal* last week, "seems pretty fair to us." Of course it does: The inherent morality of the unfettered market has long been an axiom of free-market conservative ideology. But, in the last century, democratic societies have largely rejected it. There are plenty of factors that contribute to an individual's economic standing over which he or she has no control—inherited traits, subsidized education, social connections, and simple luck. That standing is not entirely a reflection of hard work and old-fashioned gumption. And, as a result, redirecting some wealth from the rich to advance the greater good is entirely fair.

Of course, redistribution must have limits. At some point, the effort to transfer income from rich to poor becomes a matter of diminishing returns. The task of a functioning democratic polity is to find a reasonable balance. But contemporary American conservatives object to the very idea that the public has a right to consider the amount of redistribution it desires. Their objection can be summed up in a single phrase: "class warfare." Through obsessive repetition the buzzword has effectively stigmatized the notion of distributional justice, however timidly it may be broached, as vaguely dangerous and un-American. "I urge Congress not to get trapped in the—the kind of rhetoric of class warfare," Bush argued not long ago. Neutral reporters have adopted the term ("Liberal Democrats," asserts NBC's Tim Russert, "are saying, 'Let's have some good old-fashioned class warfare ...' "), and Democrats feel obliged to forswear it ("I don't believe in class warfare," insists Indiana Senator Evan Bayh).

At first glance, class warfare seems like a strange thing to worry about. In America in this day and age the upper classes have little to fear in the way of angry proletarian mobs. Nonetheless, conservatives seem to regard even the slightest mention of distributional equity as a dangerous form of hate speech. A recent column by *The Wall Street Journal*'s Peggy Noonan ponders why Democrats "always want you to show your loyalty to the poor by hating the rich." But Noonan does not provide a single example of Democrats hating the rich. This may be because Noonan is too lazy to dig up such an example, but more likely it is because none exists. Why would the Democrats hate the rich, anyway? A disproportionate number of elected Democrats—including Jay Rockefeller, Jon Corzine, and Maria Cantwell—*are* rich. (OK, Cantwell *was* rich.) Any Democrat with a prominent role in public life almost certainly earns enough to place him near the top of the income scale. And any such Democrat would also have to spend much of his waking life sucking up to possible donors who are richer still. Maybe some Democrats do hate the rich, but, if so, they quite sensibly keep their prejudice to themselves.

In fact, Noonan's complaint notwithstanding, the only tax cut combatants who've been publicly slandering the rich are Republicans. When a group of multimillionaires defended the estate tax, Noonan's *Journal* colleague Paul Gigot—who rarely finishes a column without inveighing against class warfare—dubbed them the "Fat-Cat Cavalry," sneering that they had dropped in "from Aspen or St. Bart's." Introducing Bush at a tax cut rally last month, GOP Representative David Vitter taunted tax cut skeptic Mary Landrieu, "We don't know what Washington, D.C., mansion you live in, Senator." But such language does not qualify as class warfare, as conservatives employ the phrase, because it is on behalf of the interests of the rich. For the same reason, conservatives don't mind that Bush speaks out against the injustice of the poor paying higher taxes than people on Wall Street. The rule here seems clear: It's doesn't count as class warfare if you're lying.

IN WASHINGTON PARLANCE, then, "class warfare" does not mean anything like war between classes. It is simply an all-purpose slur to stifle discussion of distributional equity, in much the same way as the left can use fatuous charges of bigotry. *National Review Online* actually made this point explicit, scolding GOP Senator Charles Grassley for "obsess[ing] over federal debt reduction, and what he calls 'tax equality' (read: class warfare)."

Indeed, there is something telling in the apocalyptic tone conservatives increasingly use to describe even moderately egalitarian policies espoused by liberals. Daniel Mitchell, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, accuses Democrats of promoting "the poisonous Marxist ideology of class warfare." Tony Snow, a normally genial columnist and Fox News talking head, writes, "Upper classes have always pulled societies forward economically—and their conspicuous prosperity always has aroused the jealousies of lower classes. The envious set out to strip the rich of their lucre, believing mistakenly that by redistributing income they could make everybody affluent."

These comments, it must be remembered, are not made in the context of some neo-socialist effort to redistribute wealth. No one involved in the current budget debate is suggesting that taxes on the wealthy be increased. No one is even arguing that the wealthy should do without a tax cut. The most left-wing stance anywhere on the political stage (and it is a minority view even within the Democratic Party) is that the rich should merely receive the same size tax cut as everybody else. And this at the end of a quarter-century during which the share of after-tax income held by the top 1 percent of tax filers has more than doubled.

For all their histrionics, conservatives are not really worried about Marxism taking root in America, or the specter of class bigotry. What they really fear is that an honest discussion of the class ramifications of the Bush tax cut will lead Americans to decide that they don't much like them. And that they'd rather have larger tax cuts for the poor and smaller ones for the rich. Or that they'd rather have a smaller tax cut for everyone and use the money for a prescription-drug benefit. The Bush administration has understood all along that it can win a debate over economic priorities only by preventing that debate from occurring in the first place. And, for the most part, it is succeeding. Those business lobbyists in hard hats should feel pretty good—their masquerade is working better than they ever could have hoped. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Love, Deathless and Lifeless

TWO FILMS MADE ten years apart don't precisely constitute a trend, yet in this case the second one almost seems an attempt to take the first one further. In 1991 Anthony Minghella wrote and directed *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, about a blissfully married London couple. The husband dies, and the wife is simply unable to accept the fact. The husband returns from time to time—not a ghost, the husband. Explanations are not offered. The two roles were so movingly played by Juliet Stevenson and Alan Rickman that the film had no trace of spookiness. It seemed to be, calmly and credibly, about a love stronger than death.

Now the French director François Ozon presents **Under the Sand** (Winstar), which he wrote with three collaborators, and which is about another wife who cannot accept the death of her husband. Ozon's previous film, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*, adapted from an early Fassbinder play about homosexuality, was somewhat mannered, and proud of its mannerisms. All that flummery is gone now: Ozon no longer needs to prove that he knows cinema. This film's reticence and empathy quickly induce our belief—not that the story is true, but that the wife, without lunacy or hallucination, believes it.

Lovely, poignant confirmation comes from Charlotte Rampling, who plays the wife. (English-born, she is bilingual and has been in several French films.) I never thought I'd be using terms like that about Rampling. I saw her first in *The Night Porter* (1974) as a Viennese woman who recognizes a porter in a hotel as a former SS officer. He tortured her in a prison camp, and she now seeks him out as a sadistic lover to continue the torture. Rampling's subsequent roles, those that I have seen, didn't do much to lift her out of the bizarrerie department until Sidney Lumet's *The Verdict*, in which she was taciturn and true as a schemer eventually devastated by her scheme. Now, older of course and in fact much more attractive, Rampling creates a woman who is clearly intelligent and sophisticated, and yet who, without any awareness of oddity, continues to live with her dead husband.

The woman is English, is married to a Frenchman, and is living in Paris. One summer day she and her husband are on a beach, more or less alone. She sleeps in the sun while he goes for a swim. She wakes to find that he has not returned. Police and helicopters search for him—in vain.

The first clue to the wife's oddity is that she does not become frantic or hysterical. She persists in the search, and she keeps in touch with the officials after her return to Paris, but she lives her life as if her husband were still around. She talks to friends about expecting him back from a trip and how she is preparing things for him. The friends, after exchanging glances, pursue a course they have apparently chosen: they do not contradict her. For her part, she sees her husband—not a specter, but her husband, whom we see, too—as he moves occasionally through her life.

She does miss sexual contact, and she begins an affair with a man of about her age. Once, when they are in bed, she glances up and sees her husband peering through the doorway. It doesn't disturb her: she acts as if she expected him to understand, which he does.

The mystery persists. The situation is never "solved." At the end, when she returns one day to the beach where her husband disappeared, the mystery is quite deliberately left mysterious. But *Under the Sand*, like *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, is performed so straightforwardly, so seriously, and its characters are shown to be so intelligent, that it never seems a freakish supernatural tale. As with the English film, our belief in what we see is irrelevant; the woman's belief is what matters. Again, as with the earlier film, this French one invites questions about the nature of love. Every marriage ceremony contains some version of the idea of love "until death do us part." But if love is all it is cracked up to be, can death kill it? We all know people whom we respect who have loved spouses, lost them, loved again, and married again. Hasn't it made us wonder what love—in thoughtful beings—really *is*?

Possibly there is some danger in loading the Minghella and Ozon films with more weight than they can bear. But unless we are stirred to these questions by these films, we reduce them to sentimental trickery. Which they are not.

Doesn't Warren Beatty have any friends who are trustworthy? Can't they persuade him that he has passed the point where he was a sexual dynamo on the screen? That nowadays it is slightly embarrassing to see him play a hot lover? This is not to argue that men of his age (Beatty was born in 1937) have no sexual vitality, but can film actors in their sixties play hyperactive studs? (He is called a stud in this new film.) Robert Redford (also born in 1937) takes roles that give his crepuscular sex appeal a touch of melancholy. Beatty surrounds himself here with beauties who are mad about him, and he makes sure that the script compliments him on his powers; so his contradictory fading verges on the risible.

What makes it very much worse is that his gallivanting is the absolute center of a comedy called **Town and Country** (New Line). Reports of the film's troubles—changes of distributors, repeated re-editing, and so on—prepared us for disaster, and this is the only way in which the film doesn't disappoint. The screenplay by Michael Laughlin and Buck Henry may once have had some structure, some satiric point toward which it was moving, but in its present condition it is not only devoid of both, it looks as if, after shooting each sequence, the film-makers sat down and cooked up the next one. Histories of silent film tell of scenarios being improvised as the filming progressed. Here that feeling is redux.

Beatty is a rich New York architect with a wife, Diane Keaton, who is some sort of designer. They have two grown children whose foreign lovers infest the family's Fifth Avenue apartment. Beatty and wife have two favorite friends, played by Garry Shandling and Goldie Hawn; Shandling is carrying on a secret gay life, and in the course of Hawn's distress she and Beatty have an affair. Beatty, meanwhile, has been deep in an affair with a cellist, Nastassja Kinski. The story somehow jumps to Sun Valley and ski land, where Beatty hooks up with the lubricious Andie MacDowell.

This episode, though obviously dragged in for bulking and for visual variety, leads to the one amusing element in the picture. MacDowell's father is a former Olympic

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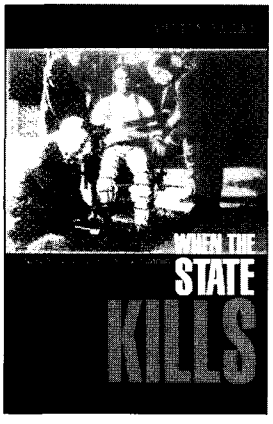

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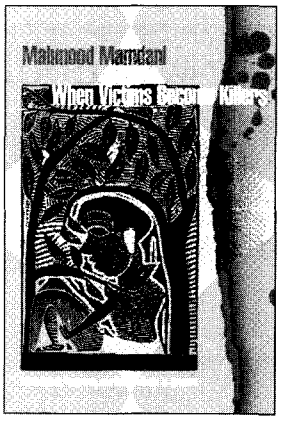

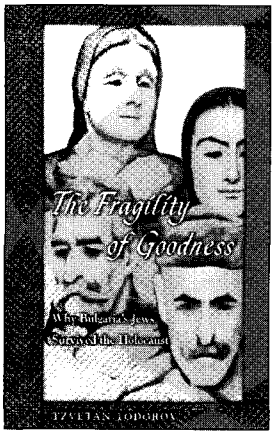

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Tzvetan Todorov

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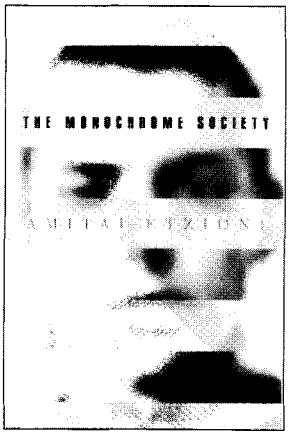

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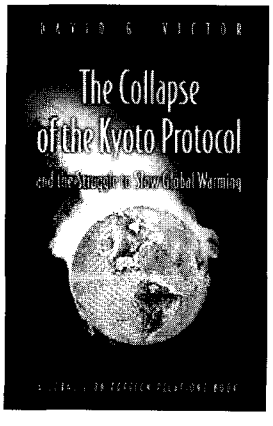

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Nike Wagner

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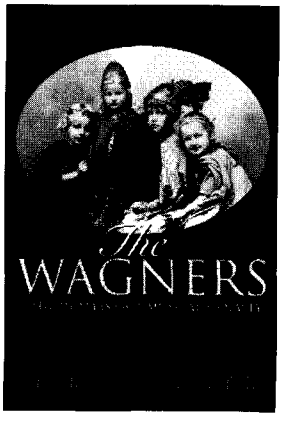

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champion and outdoor type—Charlton Heston, perfectly cast—who hunts down the philandering Beatty with a shotgun. I couldn't help liking the willingness of Heston, patron saint of the National Rifle Association, to parody a gun-toting maniac.

Hawn, lithe and fizzy, does as well as anyone in this catastrophe. Keaton flashes her smile too flauntingly. Kinski, dressed or undressed, is emotionally spurious. And can't there be some sort of national movement to suppress that non-actor Shandling?

As for Beatty, he has stuck himself, and is stuck, in a purported comedy. Despite occasional comic glints in his career, he has proved that he is not really a comedian. (Remember *Ishtar* and *The Fortune*.) Why does he have to go on proving it, especially now that his glamour is dimming? Beatty could still be a value in American film, but it would have to be some other way. ■

Why we should ban human cloning now.

Preventing a Brave New World

By LEON R. KASS

I.

THE URGENCY OF the great political struggles of the twentieth century, successfully waged against totalitarianisms first right and then left, seems to have blinded many people to a deeper and ultimately darker truth about the present age: all contemporary societies are travelling briskly in the same utopian direction. All are wedded to the modern technological project; all march eagerly to the drums of progress and fly proudly the banner of modern science; all sing loudly the Baconian anthem, "Conquer nature, relieve man's estate." Leading the triumphal procession is modern medicine, which is daily becoming ever more powerful in its battle against disease, decay, and death, thanks especially to astonishing achievements in biomedical science and technology—achievements for which we must surely be grateful.

Yet contemplating present and projected advances in genetic and reproductive technologies, in neuroscience and psychopharmacology, and in the development of artificial organs and computer-chip implants for human brains, we now clearly recognize new uses for biotechnical power that soar beyond the traditional medical goals of healing disease and relieving suffering. Human nature itself lies on the operating table, ready for alteration, for eugenic and psychic "enhancement," for wholesale re-design. In leading laboratories, academic and industrial, new creators are confidently amassing their powers and quietly honing their skills, while on the street their evangelists are zealously prophesying a post-human future. For anyone who cares about preserving our humanity, the time has come to pay attention.

Some transforming powers are already here. The Pill. In vitro fertilization. Bottled embryos. Surrogate wombs. Cloning. Genetic screening. Genetic manipulation. Organ harvesting. Mechanical spare parts. Chimeras. Brain implants. Ritalin for the young, Viagra for the old, Prozac for everyone. And, to leave this vale of tears, a little extra morphine accompanied by Muzak.

Years ago Aldous Huxley saw it coming. In his charming but disturbing novel, *Brave New World* (it appeared in 1932 and is more powerful on each re-reading), he made its meaning strikingly visible for all to see. Unlike other frightening futuristic novels of the past century, such as Orwell's already dated *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Huxley shows us a dystopia that goes with, rather than against, the human grain. Indeed, it is animated by our own most humane and progressive aspirations. Following those aspirations to their ultimate realization, Huxley enables us to recognize those less obvious but often more pernicious evils that are inextricably linked to the successful attainment of partial goods.

Huxley depicts human life seven centuries hence, living under the gentle hand of humanitarianism rendered fully competent by genetic manipulation, psychoactive drugs, hypnopaedia, and high-tech amusements. At long last, mankind has succeeded in eliminating disease, aggression, war, anxiety, suffering, guilt, envy, and grief. But this victory comes at the heavy price of homogenization, mediocrity, trivial pursuits, shallow attachments, debased tastes, spurious contentment, and souls without loves or longings. The Brave New World has achieved prosperity, community, stability, and nigh-universal contentment, only to be peopled by creatures of human shape but stunted humanity. They consume, fornicate, take "soma," enjoy "centrifugal bumble-puppy," and operate the machinery that makes it all possible. They do not read, write, think, love, or govern themselves. Art and science, virtue and religion, family and friendship are all passé. What matters most is bodily health and immediate gratification: "Never put off till tomorrow the fun you can have today." Brave New Man is so dehumanized that he does not even recognize what has been lost.

Huxley's novel, of course, is science fiction. Prozac is not yet Huxley's "soma"; cloning by nuclear transfer or splitting embryos is not exactly "Bokanovskification"; MTV and virtual-reality parlors are not quite the "feelies"; and our current safe and consequenceless sexual practices are not universally as loveless or as empty as those in the novel. But the kinships are disquieting, all the more so since our technologies of bio-psycho-engineering are still in their infancy, and in ways that make all too clear what they might look like in their full maturity. Moreover, the cultural changes that technology has already wrought among us should make us even more worried than Huxley would have us be.

In Huxley's novel, everything proceeds under the direction of an omnipotent—albeit benevolent—world state. Yet the dehumanization that he portrays does not really require despotism or external control. To the contrary, precisely because the society of the future will deliver exactly what we most want—health, safety, comfort, plenty, pleasure, peace of mind and length of days—we can reach the same humanly debased condition solely on the basis of free human choice. No need for World Controllers. Just give us the technological imperative, liberal democratic society, compassionate humanitarianism, moral pluralism, and free markets, and we can take ourselves to a Brave New World

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all by ourselves—and without even deliberately deciding to go. In case you had not noticed, the train has already left the station and is gathering speed, but no one seems to be in charge.

Some among us are delighted, of course, by this state of affairs: some scientists and biotechnologists, their entrepreneurial backers, and a cheering claque of sci-fi enthusiasts, futurologists, and libertarians. There are dreams to be realized, powers to be exercised, honors to be won, and money—big money—to be made. But many of us are worried, and not, as the proponents of the revolution self-servingly claim, because we are either ignorant of science or afraid of the unknown. To the contrary, we can see all too clearly where the train is headed, and we do not like the destination. We can distinguish cleverness about means from wisdom about ends, and we are loath to entrust the future of the race to those who cannot tell the difference. No friend of humanity cheers for a post-human future.

Yet for all our disquiet, we have until now done nothing to prevent it. We hide our heads in the sand because we enjoy the blessings that medicine keeps supplying, or we rationalize our inaction by declaring that human engineering is inevitable and we can do nothing about it. In either case, we are complicit in preparing for our own degradation, in some respects more to blame than the biozealots who, however misguided, are putting their money where their mouth is. Denial and despair, unattractive outlooks in any situation, become morally reprehensible when circumstances summon us to keep the world safe for human flourishing. Our immediate ancestors, taking up the challenge of their time, rose to the occasion and rescued the human future from the cruel dehumanizations of Nazi and Soviet tyranny. It is our more difficult task to find ways to preserve it from the soft dehumanizations of well-meaning but hubristic biotechnical "re-creationism"—and to do it without undermining biomedical science or rejecting its genuine contributions to human welfare.

TRUTH BE TOLD, it will not be easy for us to do so, and we know it. But rising to the challenge requires recognizing the difficulties. For there are indeed many features of modern life that will conspire to frustrate efforts aimed at the human control of the biomedical project. First, we Americans believe in technological automatism: where we do not foolishly believe that all innovation is progress, we fatalistically believe that it is inevitable ("If it can be done, it will be done, like it or not"). Second, we believe in freedom: the freedom of scientists to inquire, the freedom of technologists to develop, the freedom of entrepreneurs to invest and to profit, the freedom of private citizens to make use of existing technologies to satisfy any and all personal desires, including the desire to reproduce by whatever means. Third, the biomedical enterprise occupies the moral high ground of compassionate humanitarianism, upholding the supreme values of modern life—cure disease, prolong life, relieve suffering—in competition with which other moral goods rarely stand a chance. ("What the public wants is not to be sick," says James Watson, "and if we help them not to be sick, they'll be on our side.")

There are still other obstacles. Our cultural pluralism and easygoing relativism make it difficult to reach consensus on what we should embrace and what we should oppose; and moral objections to this or that biomedical practice are often facilely dismissed as religious or sectarian. Many people are unwilling to pronounce judgments about what is good or bad, right and wrong, even in matters of great importance, even for themselves—never mind for others or for society as a whole. It does not help that the biomedical project is now deeply entangled with commerce: there are increasingly powerful economic interests in favor of going full steam ahead, and no economic interests in favor of going slow. Since we live in a democracy, moreover, we face political difficulties in gaining a consensus to direct our future, and we have almost no political experience in trying to curtail the development of any new biomedical technology. Finally, and perhaps most troubling, our views of the meaning of our humanity have been so transformed by the scientific-technological approach to the world that we are in danger of forgetting what we have to lose, humanly speaking.

BUT THOUGH THE difficulties are real, our situation is far from hopeless. Regarding each of the aforementioned impediments, there is another side to the story. Though we love our gadgets and believe in progress, we have lost our innocence regarding technology. The environmental movement especially has alerted us to the unintended damage caused by unregulated technological advance, and has taught us how certain dangerous practices can be curbed. Though we favor freedom of inquiry, we recognize that experiments are deeds and not speeches, and we prohibit experimentation on human subjects without their consent, even when cures from disease might be had by unfettered research; and we limit so-called reproductive freedom by proscribing incest, polygamy, and the buying and selling of babies.

Although we esteem medical progress, biomedical institutions have ethics committees that judge research proposals on moral grounds, and, when necessary, uphold the primacy of human freedom and human dignity even over scientific discovery. Our moral pluralism notwithstanding, national commissions and review bodies have sometimes reached moral consensus to recommend limits on permissible scientific research and technological application. On the economic front, the patenting of genes and life forms and the rapid rise of genomic commerce have elicited strong concerns and criticisms, leading even former enthusiasts of the new biology to recoil from the impending commodification of human life. Though we lack political institutions experienced in setting limits on biomedical innovation, federal agencies years ago rejected the development of the plutonium-powered artificial heart, and we have nationally prohibited commercial traffic in organs for transplantation, even though a market would increase the needed supply. In recent years, several American states and many foreign countries have successfully taken political action, making certain practices illegal and placing others under moratoriums (the creation of human embryos solely for research; human germ-line genetic alteration). Most importantly, the majority of Americans are not yet so degraded or so cynical as to fail to be revolted by the society depicted in Huxley's novel. Though the obstacles to effective action are significant, they offer no excuse for resignation. Besides, it would be disgraceful to concede defeat even before we enter the fray.

Not the least of our difficulties in trying to exercise control over where biology is taking us is the fact that we do not get to decide, once and for all, for or against the destination of a post-human world. The scientific discoveries and the technical powers that will take us there come to us piecemeal, one at a time and seemingly independent from one another, each often attractively introduced as a measure that will "help [us] not to be sick." But sometimes we come to a clear fork in the road where decision is possible, and where we know that our decision will make a world of difference—indeed, it will make a permanently different world. Fortunately, we stand now at the point of such a momentous decision. Events have conspired to provide us with a perfect opportunity to seize the initiative and to gain some control of the biotechnical project. I refer to the prospect of human cloning, a practice absolutely central to Huxley's fictional world. Indeed, creating and manipulating life in the laboratory is the gateway to a Brave New World, not only in fiction but also in fact.

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"To clone or not to clone a human being" is no longer a fanciful question. Success in cloning sheep, and also cows, mice, pigs, and goats, makes it perfectly clear that a fateful decision is now at hand: whether we should welcome or even tolerate the cloning of human beings. If recent newspaper reports are to be believed, reputable scientists and physicians have announced their intention to produce the first human clone in the coming year. Their efforts may already be under way.

The media, gawking and titillating as is their wont, have been softening us up for this possibility by turning the bizarre into the familiar. In the four years since the birth of Dolly the cloned sheep, the tone of discussing the prospect of human cloning has gone from "Yuck" to "Oh?" to "Gee whiz" to "Why not?" The sentimentalizers, aided by leading bioethicists, have downplayed talk about eugenically cloning the beautiful and the brawny or the best and the brightest. They have taken instead to defending clonal reproduction for humanitarian or compassionate reasons: to treat infertility in people who are said to "have no other choice," to avoid the risk of severe genetic disease, to "replace" a child who has died. For the sake of these rare benefits, they would have us countenance the entire practice of human cloning, the consequences be damned.

But we dare not be complacent about what is at issue, for the stakes are very high. Human cloning, though partly continuous with previous reproductive technologies, is also something radically new in itself and in its easily foreseeable consequences—especially when coupled with powers for genetic "enhancement" and germline genetic modification that may soon become available, owing to the recently completed Human Genome Project. I exaggerate somewhat, but in the direction of the truth: we are compelled to decide nothing less than whether human procreation is going to remain human, whether children are going to be made to order rather than begotten, and whether we wish to say yes in principle to the road that leads to the dehumanized hell of *Brave New World*.

Four years ago I addressed this subject in these pages, trying to articulate the moral grounds of our repugnance at the prospect of human cloning ("The Wisdom of Repugnance," TNR, June 2, 1997). Subsequent events have only strengthened my conviction that cloning is a bad idea whose time should not come; but my emphasis this time is more practical. To be sure, I would still like to persuade undecided readers that cloning is a serious evil, but I am more interested in encouraging those who oppose human cloning but who think that we are impotent to prevent it, and in mobilizing them to support new and solid legislative efforts to stop it. In addition, I want readers who may worry less about cloning and more about the impending prospects of germline genetic manipulation or other eugenic practices to realize the unique practical opportunity that now presents itself to us.

For we have here a golden opportunity to exercise some control over where biology is taking us. The technology of cloning is discrete and well defined, and it requires considerable technical know-how and dexterity; we can therefore know by name many of the likely practitioners. The public demand for cloning is extremely low, and most people are decidedly against it. Nothing scientifically or medically important would be lost by banning clonal reproduction; alternative and non-objectionable means are available to obtain some of the most important medical benefits claimed for (non-reproductive) human cloning. The commercial interests in human cloning are, for now, quite limited; and the nations of the world are actively seeking to prevent it. Now may be as good a chance as we will ever have to get our hands on the wheel of the runaway train now headed for a post-human world and to steer it toward a more dignified human future.

II.

What is cloning? Cloning, or asexual reproduction, is the production of individuals who are genetically identical to an already existing individual. The procedure's name is fancy—"somatic cell nuclear transfer"—but its concept is simple. Take a mature but unfertilized egg; remove or deactivate its nucleus; introduce a nucleus obtained from a specialized (somatic) cell of an adult organism. Once the egg begins to divide, transfer the little embryo to a woman's uterus to initiate a pregnancy. Since almost all the hereditary material of a cell is contained within its nucleus, the re-nucleated egg and the individual into which it develops are genetically identical to the organism that was the source of the transferred nucleus.

An unlimited number of genetically identical individuals—the group, as well as each of its members, is called "a clone"—could be produced by nuclear transfer. In principle, any person, male or female, newborn or adult, could be cloned, and in any quantity; and because stored cells can outlive their sources, one may even clone the dead. Since cloning requires no personal involvement on the part of the person whose genetic material is used, it could easily be used to reproduce living or deceased persons without their consent—a threat to reproductive freedom that has received relatively little attention.

Some possible misconceptions need to be avoided. Cloning is not Xeroxing: the clone of Bill Clinton, though his genetic double, would enter the world hairless, toothless, and peeing in his diapers, like any other human infant. But neither is cloning just like natural twinning: the cloned twin will be identical to an older, existing adult; and it will arise not by chance but by deliberate design; and its entire genetic makeup will be pre-selected by its parents and/or scientists. Moreover, the success rate of cloning, at least at first, will probably not be very high: the Scots transferred two hundred seventy-seven adult nuclei into sheep eggs, implanted twenty-nine clonal embryos, and achieved the birth of only one live lamb clone.

For this reason, among others, it is unlikely that, at least for now, the practice would be very popular; and there is little immediate worry of mass-scale production of multicopies. Still, for the tens of thousands of people who sustain more than three hundred assisted-reproduction clinics in the United States and already avail themselves of in vitro fertilization and other techniques, cloning would be an option with virtually no added fuss. Panos Zavos, the Kentucky reproduction specialist who has announced his plans to clone a child, claims that he has already received thousands of e-mailed requests from people eager to clone, despite the known risks of failure and damaged offspring. Should commercial interests develop in "nucleus-banking," as they have in sperm-banking and egg-harvesting; should famous athletes or other celebrities decide to market their DNA the way they now market their autographs and nearly everything else; should techniques of embryo and germline genetic testing and manipulation arrive as anticipated, increasing the use of laboratory assistance in order to obtain "better" babies—should all this come to pass, cloning, if it is permitted, could become more than a marginal practice simply on the basis of free reproductive choice.

What are we to think about this prospect? Nothing good. Indeed, most people are repelled by nearly all aspects of human cloning: the possibility of mass production of human beings, with large clones of look-alikes, compromised in their individuality; the idea of father-son or mother-daughter "twins"; the bizarre prospect of a woman bearing and rearing a genetic copy of herself, her spouse, or even her deceased father or mother; the grotesqueness of conceiving a child as an exact "replacement" for another who has

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died; the utilitarian creation of embryonic duplicates of oneself, to be frozen away or created when needed to provide homologous tissues or organs for transplantation; the narcissism of those who would clone themselves, and the arrogance of others who think they know who deserves to be cloned; the Frankensteinian hubris to create a human life and increasingly to control its destiny; men playing at being God. Almost no one finds any of the suggested reasons for human cloning compelling, and almost everyone anticipates its possible misuses and abuses. And the popular belief that human cloning cannot be prevented makes the prospect all the more revolting.

Revulsion is not an argument; and some of yesterday's repugnances are today calmly accepted—not always for the better. In some crucial cases, however, repugnance is the emotional expression of deep wisdom, beyond reason's power completely to articulate it. Can anyone really give an argument fully adequate to the horror that is father-daughter incest (even with consent), or bestiality, or the mutilation of a corpse, or the eating of human flesh, or the rape or murder of another human being? Would anybody's failure to give full rational justification for his revulsion at those practices make that revulsion ethically suspect?

I suggest that our repugnance at human cloning belongs in this category. We are repelled by the prospect of cloning human beings not because of the strangeness or the novelty of the undertaking, but because we intuit and we feel, immediately and without argument, the violation of things that we rightfully hold dear. We sense that cloning represents a profound defilement of our given nature as procreative beings, and of the social relations built on this natural ground. We also sense that cloning is a radical form of child abuse. In this age in which everything is held to be permissible so long as it is freely done, and in which our bodies are regarded as mere instruments of our autonomous rational will, repugnance may be the only voice left that speaks up to defend the central core of our humanity. Shallow are the souls that have forgotten how to shudder.

III.

YET REPUGNANCE NEED NOT stand naked before the bar of reason. The wisdom of our horror at human cloning can be at least partially articulated, even if this is finally one of those instances about which the heart has its reasons that reason cannot entirely know. I offer four objections to human cloning: that it constitutes unethical experimentation; that it threatens identity and individuality; that it turns procreation into manufacture (especially when understood as the harbinger of manipulations to come); and that it means despotism over children and perversion of parenthood. Please note: I speak only about so-called reproductive cloning, not about the creation of cloned embryos for research. The objections that may be raised against creating (or using) embryos for research are entirely independent of whether the research embryos are produced by cloning. What is radically distinct and radically new is reproductive cloning.

Any attempt to clone a human being would constitute an unethical experiment upon the resulting child-to-be. In all the animal experiments, fewer than two to three percent of all cloning attempts succeeded. Not only are there fetal deaths and stillborn infants, but many of the so-called "successes" are in fact failures. As has only recently become clear, there is a very high incidence of major disabilities and deformities in cloned animals that attain live birth. Cloned cows often have heart and lung problems; cloned mice later develop pathological obesity; other live-born cloned animals fail to reach normal developmental milestones.

The problem, scientists suggest, may lie in the fact that an egg with a new somatic nucleus must re-program itself in a matter of minutes or hours (whereas the nucleus of an unaltered egg has been prepared

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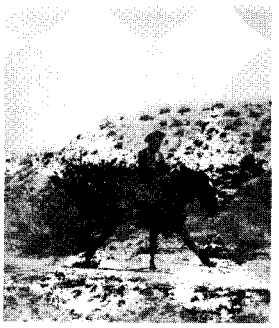

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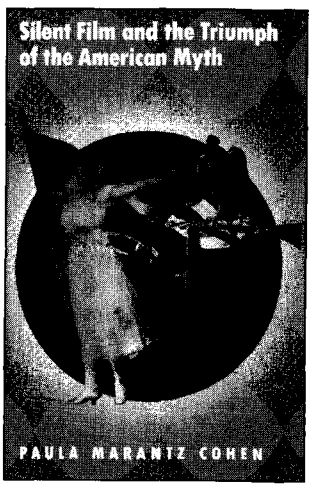

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over months and years). There is thus a greatly increased likelihood of error in translating the genetic instructions, leading to developmental defects some of which will show themselves only much later. (Note also that these induced abnormalities may also affect the stem cells that scientists hope to harvest from cloned embryos. Lousy embryos, lousy stem cells.) Nearly all scientists now agree that attempts to clone human beings carry massive risks of producing unhealthy, abnormal, and malformed children. What are we to do with them? Shall we just discard the ones that fall short of expectations? Considered opinion is today nearly unanimous, even among scientists: attempts at human cloning are irresponsible and unethical. We cannot ethically even get to know whether or not human cloning is feasible.

If it were successful, cloning would create serious issues of identity and individuality. The clone may experience concerns about his distinctive identity not only because he will be, in genotype and in appearance, identical to another human being, but because he may also be twin to the person who is his "father" or his "mother"—if one can still call them that. Unaccountably, people treat as innocent the homey case of intrafamilial cloning—the cloning of husband or wife (or single mother). They forget about the unique dangers of mixing the twin relation with the parent-child relation. (For this situation, the relation of contemporaneous twins is no precedent; yet even this less problematic situation teaches us how difficult it is to wrest independence from the being for whom one has the most powerful affinity.) Virtually no parent is going to be able to treat a clone of himself or herself as one treats a child generated by the lottery of sex. What will happen when the adolescent clone of Mommy becomes the spitting image of the woman with whom Daddy once fell in love? In case of divorce, will Mommy still love the clone of Daddy, even though she can no longer stand the sight of Daddy himself?

Most people think about cloning from the point of view of adults choosing to clone. Almost nobody thinks about what it would be like to be the cloned child. Surely his or her new life would constantly be scrutinized in relation to that of the older version. Even in the absence of unusual parental expectations for the clone—say, to live the same life, only without its errors—the child is likely to be ever a curiosity, ever a potential source of déjà vu. Unlike "normal" identical twins, a cloned individual—copied from whomever—will be saddled with a genotype that has already lived. He will not be fully a surprise to the world: people are likely always to compare his doings in life with those of his alter ego, especially if he is a clone of someone gifted or famous. True, his nurture and his circumstance will be different; genotype is not exactly destiny. But one must also expect parental efforts to shape this new life after the original—or at least to view the child with the original version always firmly in mind. For why else did they clone from the star basketball player, the mathematician, or the beauty queen—or even dear old Dad—in the first place?

Human cloning would also represent a giant step toward the transformation of begetting into making, of procreation into manufacture (literally, "handmade"), a process that has already begun with in vitro fertilization and genetic testing of embryos. With cloning, not only is the process in hand, but the total genetic blueprint of the cloned individual is selected and determined by the human artisans. To be sure, subsequent development is still according to natural processes; and the resulting children will be recognizably human. But we would be taking a major step into making man himself simply another one of the man-made things.

How does begetting differ from making? In natural procreation, human beings come together to give existence to another being that is formed exactly as we were, by what we are—living, hence perishable, hence aspiringly erotic, hence procreative human beings. But in clonal reproduction, and in the more advanced forms of manufacture to which it will lead, we give existence to a being not by what we are but by what we intend and design.

Let me be clear. The problem is not the mere intervention of technique, and the point is not that "nature knows best." The problem is that any child whose being, character, and capacities exist owing to human design does not stand on the same plane as its makers. As with any product of our making, no matter how excellent, the artificer stands above it, not as an equal but as a superior, transcending it by his will and creative prowess. In human cloning, scientists and prospective "parents" adopt a technocratic attitude toward human children: human children become their artifacts. Such an arrangement is profoundly dehumanizing, no matter how good the product.

Procreation dehumanized into manufacture is further degraded by commodification, a virtually inescapable result of allowing baby-making to proceed under the banner of commerce. Genetic and reproductive biotechnology companies are already growth industries, but they will soon go into commercial orbit now that the Human Genome Project has been completed. "Human eggs for sale" is already a big business, masquerading under the pretense of "donation." Newspaper advertisements on elite college campuses offer up to $50,000 for an egg "donor" tall enough to play women's basketball and with SAT scores high enough for admission to Stanford; and to nobody's surprise, at such prices there are many young coeds eager to help shoppers obtain the finest babies money can buy. (The egg and womb-renting entrepreneurs shamelessly proceed on the ancient, disgusting, misogynist premise that most women will give you access to their bodies, if the price is right.) Even before the capacity for human cloning is perfected, established companies will have invested in the harvesting of eggs from ovaries obtained at autopsy or through ovarian surgery, practiced embryonic genetic alteration, and initiated the stockpiling of prospective donor tissues. Through the rental of surrogate-womb services, and through the buying and selling of tissues and embryos priced according to the merit of the donor, the commodification of nascent human life will be unstoppable.

Finally, the practice of human cloning by nuclear transfer—like other anticipated forms of genetically engineering the next generation—would enshrine and aggravate a profound misunderstanding of the meaning of having children and of the parent-child relationship. When a couple normally chooses to procreate, the partners are saying yes to the emergence of new life in its novelty—are saying yes not only to having a child, but also to having whatever child this child turns out to be. In accepting our finitude, in opening ourselves to our replacement, we tacitly confess the limits of our control.

Embracing the future by procreating means precisely that we are relinquishing our grip in the very activity of taking up our own share in what we hope will be the immortality of human life and the human species. This means that our children are not our children: they are not our property, they are not our possessions. Neither are they supposed to live our lives for us, or to live anyone's life but their own. Their genetic distinctiveness and independence are the natural foreshadowing of the deep truth that they have their own, never-before-enacted life to live. Though sprung from a past, they take an uncharted course into the future.

Much mischief is already done by parents who try to live vicariously through their children. Children are sometimes compelled to fulfill the broken dreams of

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unhappy parents. But whereas most parents normally have hopes for their children, cloning parents will have expectations. In cloning, such overbearing parents will have taken at the start a decisive step that contradicts the entire meaning of the open and forward-looking nature of parent-child relations. The child is given a genotype that has already lived, with full expectation that this blueprint of a past life ought to be controlling the life that is to come. A wanted child now means a child who exists precisely to fulfill parental wants. Like all the more precise eugenic manipulations that will follow in its wake, cloning is thus inherently despotic, for it seeks to make one's children after one's own image (or an image of one's choosing) and their future according to one's will.

Is this hyperbolic? Consider concretely the new realities of responsibility and guilt in the households of the cloned. No longer only the sins of the parents, but also the genetic choices of the parents, will be visited on the children—and beyond the third and fourth generation; and everyone will know who is responsible. No parent will be able to blame nature or the lottery of sex for an unhappy adolescent's big nose, dull wit, musical ineptitude, nervous disposition, or anything else that he hates about himself. Fairly or not, children will hold their cloners responsible for everything, for nature as well as for nurture. And parents, especially the better ones, will be limitlessly liable to guilt. Only the truly despotic souls will sleep the sleep of the innocent.

IV.

THE DEFENDERS OF cloning are not wittingly friends of despotism. Quite the contrary. Deaf to most other considerations, they regard themselves mainly as friends of freedom: the freedom of individuals to reproduce, the freedom of scientists and inventors to discover and to devise and to foster "progress" in genetic knowledge and technique, the freedom of entrepreneurs to profit in the market. They want large-scale cloning only for animals, but they wish to preserve cloning as a human option for exercising our "right to reproduce"—our right to have children, and children with "desirable genes." As some point out, under our "right to reproduce" we already practice early forms of unnatural, artificial, and extra-marital reproduction, and we already practice early forms of eugenic choice. For that reason, they argue, cloning is no big deal.

We have here a perfect example of the logic of the slippery slope. The principle of reproductive freedom currently enunciated by the proponents of cloning logically embraces the ethical acceptability of sliding all the way down: to producing children wholly in the laboratory from sperm to term (should it become feasible), and to producing children whose entire genetic makeup will be the product of parental eugenic planning and choice. If reproductive freedom means the right to have a child of one's own choosing by whatever means, then reproductive freedom knows and accepts no limits.

Proponents want us to believe that there are legitimate uses of cloning that can be distinguished from illegitimate uses, but by their own principles no such limits can be found. (Nor could any such limits be enforced in practice: once cloning is permitted, no one ever need discover whom one is cloning and why.) Reproductive freedom, as they understand it, is governed solely by the subjective wishes of the parents-to-be. The sentimentally appealing case of the childless married couple is, on these grounds, indistinguishable from the case of an individual (married or not) who would like to clone someone famous or talented, living or dead. And the principle here endorsed justifies not only cloning but also all future artificial attempts to create (manufacture) "better" or "perfect" babies.

The "perfect baby," of course, is the project not of the infertility doctors, but of the eugenic scientists and their supporters, who, for the time being, are content to hide behind the skirts of the partisans of reproductive freedom and compassion for the infertile. For them, the paramount right is not the so-called right to reproduce, it is what the biologist Bentley Glass called, a quarter of a century ago, "the right of every child to be born with a sound physical and mental constitution, based on a sound genotype ... the inalienable right to a sound heritage." But to secure this right, and to achieve the requisite quality control over new human life, human conception and gestation will need to be brought fully into the bright light of the laboratory, beneath which the child-to-be can be fertilized, nourished, pruned, weeded, watched, inspected, prodded, pinched, cajoled, injected, tested, rated, graded, approved, stamped, wrapped, sealed, and delivered. There is no other way to produce the perfect baby.

If you think that such scenarios require outside coercion or governmental tyranny, you are mistaken. Once it becomes possible, with the aid of human genomics, to produce or to select for what some regard as "better babies"—smarter, prettier, healthier, more athletic—parents will leap at the opportunity to "improve" their offspring. Indeed, not to do so will be socially regarded as a form of child neglect. Those who would ordinarily be opposed to such tinkering will be under enormous pressure to compete on behalf of their as yet unborn children—just as some now plan almost from their children's birth how to get them into Harvard. Never mind that, lacking a standard of "good" or "better," no one can really know whether any such changes will truly be improvements.

Proponents of cloning urge us to forget about the science-fiction scenarios of laboratory manufacture or multiple-copy clones, and to focus only on the sympathetic cases of infertile couples exercising their reproductive rights. But why, if the single cases are so innocent, should multiplying their performance be so off-putting? (Similarly, why do others object to people's making money from that practice if the practice itself is perfectly acceptable?) The so-called science-fiction cases—say, *Brave New World*—make vivid the meaning of what looks to us, mistakenly, to be benign. They reveal that what looks like compassionate humanitarianism is, in the end, crushing dehumanization.

V.

WHETHER OR NOT they share my reasons, most people, I think, share my conclusion: that human cloning is unethical in itself and dangerous in its likely consequences, which include the precedent that it will establish for designing our children. Some reach this conclusion for their own good reasons, different from my own: concerns about distributive justice in access to eugenic cloning; worries about the genetic effects of asexual "inbreeding"; aversion to the implicit premise of genetic determinism; objections to the embryonic and fetal wastage that must necessarily accompany the efforts; religious opposition to "man playing God." But never mind why: the overwhelming majority of our fellow Americans remain firmly opposed to cloning human beings.

For us, then, the real questions are: What should we do about it? How can we best succeed? These questions should concern everyone eager to secure deliberate human control over the powers that could re-design our humanity, even if cloning is not the issue over which they would choose to make their stand. And the answer to the first question seems pretty plain. What we should do is work to prevent human cloning by making it illegal.

We should aim for a global legal ban, if possible, and for a unilateral national ban at a minimum—and soon, before the fact is upon us. To be sure, legal bans can be violated; but we certainly curtail much mischief by outlawing incest, voluntary servitude, and the buying and selling of organs and babies. To be sure, renegade

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scientists may secretly undertake to violate such a law, but we can deter them by both criminal sanctions and monetary penalties, as well as by removing any incentive they have to proudly claim credit for their technological bravado.

Such a ban on clonal baby-making will not harm the progress of basic genetic science and technology. On the contrary, it will reassure the public that scientists are happy to proceed without violating the deep ethical norms and intuitions of the human community. It will also protect honorable scientists from a public backlash against the brazen misconduct of the rogues. As many scientists have publicly confessed, free and worthy science probably has much more to fear from a strong public reaction to a cloning fiasco than it does from a cloning ban, provided that the ban is judiciously crafted and vigorously enforced against those who would violate it.

FIVE STATES—Michigan, Louisiana, California, Rhode Island, and Virginia—have already enacted a ban on human cloning, and several others are likely to follow suit this year. Michigan, for example, has made it a felony, punishable by imprisonment for not more than ten years or a fine of not more than $10 million, or both, to "intentionally engage in or attempt to engage in human cloning," where human cloning means "the use of human somatic cell nuclear transfer technology to produce a human embryo." Internationally, the movement to ban human cloning gains momentum. France and Germany have banned cloning (and germline genetic engineering), and the Council of Europe is working to have it banned in all of its forty-one member countries, and Canada is expected to follow suit. The United Nations, UNESCO, and the Group of Seven have called for a global ban on human cloning.

Given the decisive actions of the rest of the industrialized world, the United States looks to some observers to be a rogue nation. A few years ago, soon after the birth of Dolly, President Clinton called for legislation to outlaw human cloning, and attempts were made to produce a national ban. Yet none was enacted, despite general agreement in Congress that it would be desirable to have such a ban. One might have thought that it would be easy enough to find clear statutory language for prohibiting attempts to clone a human being (and other nations have apparently not found it difficult). But, alas, in the last national go-around, there was trouble over the apparently vague term "human being," and whether it includes the early (preimplantation) embryonic stages of human life. Learning from this past failure, we can do better this time around. Besides, circumstances have changed greatly in the intervening three years, making a ban both more urgent and less problematic.

Two major anti-cloning bills were introduced into the Senate in 1998. The Democratic bill (Kennedy-Feinstein) would have banned so-called reproductive cloning by prohibiting transfer of cloned embryos into women to initiate pregnancy. The Republican bill (Frist-Bond) would have banned *all* cloning by prohibiting the creation even of embryonic human clones. Both sides opposed "reproductive cloning," the attempt to bring to birth a living human child who is the clone of someone now (or previously) alive. But the Democratic bill sanctioned creating cloned embryos for research purposes, and the Republican bill did not. The pro-life movement could not support the former, whereas the scientific community and the biotechnology industry opposed the latter; indeed, they successfully lobbied a dozen Republican senators to oppose taking a vote on the Republican bill (which even its supporters now admit was badly drafted). Owing to a deep and unbridgeable gulf over the question of embryo research, we did not get the congressional ban on reproductive cloning that nearly everyone wanted. It would be tragic if we again failed to produce a ban on human cloning because of its seemingly unavoidable entanglement with the more divisive issue of embryo research.

To find a way around this impasse, several people (myself included) advocated a legislative "third way," one that firmly banned only reproductive cloning but did not legitimate creating cloned embryos for research. This, it turns out, is hard to do. It is easy enough to state the necessary negative disclaimer that would set aside the embryo-research question: "Nothing in this act shall be taken to determine the legality of creating cloned embryos for research; this act neither permits nor prohibits such activity." It is much more difficult to state the positive prohibition in terms that are unambiguous and acceptable to all sides. To indicate only one difficulty: indifference to the creation of embryonic clones coupled with a ban (only) on their transfer would place the federal government in the position of demanding the destruction of nascent life, a bitter pill to swallow even for pro-choice advocates.

GIVEN BOTH THESE difficulties, and given the imminence of attempts at human cloning, I now believe that what we need is an all-out ban on human cloning, including the creation of embryonic clones. I am convinced that all halfway measures will prove to be morally, legally, and strategically flawed, and—most important—that they will not be effective in obtaining the desired result. Anyone truly serious about preventing human reproductive cloning must seek to stop the process from the beginning. Our changed circumstances, and the now evident defects of the less restrictive alternatives, make an all-out ban by far the most attractive and effective option.

Here's why. Creating cloned human children ("reproductive cloning") necessarily begins by producing cloned human embryos. Preventing the latter would prevent the former, and prudence alone might counsel building such a "fence around the law." Yet some scientists favor embryo cloning as a way of obtaining embryos for research or as sources of cells and tissues for the possible benefit of others. (This practice they misleadingly call "therapeutic cloning" rather than the more accurate "cloning for research" or "experimental cloning," so as to obscure the fact that the clone will be "treated" only to exploitation and destruction, and that any potential future beneficiaries and any future "therapies" are at this point purely hypothetical.)

The prospect of creating new human life solely to be exploited in this way has been condemned on moral grounds by many people—including *The Washington Post*, President Clinton, and many other supporters of a woman's right to abortion—as displaying a profound disrespect for life. Even those who are willing to scavenge so-called "spare embryos"—those products of *in vitro* fertilization made in excess of people's reproductive needs, and otherwise likely to be discarded—draw back from creating human embryos explicitly and solely for research purposes. They reject outright what they regard as the exploitation and the instrumentalization of nascent human life. In addition, others who are agnostic about the moral status of the embryo see the wisdom of not needlessly offending the sensibilities of their fellow citizens who are opposed to such practices.

But even setting aside these obvious moral first impressions, a few moments of reflection show why an anti-cloning law that permitted the cloning of embryos but criminalized their transfer to produce a child would be a moral blunder. This would be a law that was not merely permissively "pro-choice" but emphatically and prescriptively "anti-life." While permitting the creation of an embryonic life, it would make it a federal offense to try to keep it alive and bring it to birth. Whatever one thinks of the moral status or the ontological status of the human embryo, moral sense and practical wisdom recoil

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"Excessive Force"

Are Israelis overreacting to the present upheaval?

Once again, the Palestinians have risen in bloody upheaval, in the second "intifada", allegedly provoked by (now) Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. Many think that Israel is using "excessive force" in attempting to quell this uprising.

What are the facts?

How did it come about? First of all, the claim that this uprising came about as a result of Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount is a silly and flimsy pretext. This uprising, now several months old, was carefully planned and continues to be orchestrated by the Palestinian Authority, of which Yasser Arafat is chairman. He pulls all the strings; nothing happens without his approval.

So far, hundreds have died and thousands have been wounded in this uprising -- most of them Palestinians, including children and even babies. Unbelievable though it may seem to us, Palestinian children who have died or who have been injured were deliberately put into the crossfire by their parents. Israeli children who were killed or who were injured were, in every case, victims of snipers, who deliberately targeted those innocents for their bloody purposes.

There are two kinds of Israeli victims: Those who are ambushed in random terror attacks against civilians, either on the highways or in the cities, by snipers, by suicide bombers or by Arabs deliberately driving their cars into unsuspecting crowds. And then there are the victims of the never-ending war in the streets. It is typically fought with rocks thrown by teenagers and even children in the front, and by soldiers with bombs, Molotov cocktails, and guns in the background. The weapons used are those that the Israelis foolishly gave to the Palestinians for their "police force" or which, in full violation of the Oslo Accord, the Palestinians smuggled into the territory of the Palestinian Authority.

It is true that the number of Palestinian casualties is substantially larger than those of the Israelis. This disparity is partly the result of the decision of the Palestinians to create martyrs and to evoke world sympathy for their plight and -- the ultimate hope -- to have an international force, a U.N. contingent, stationed in Israel or in the territories. The other reason that the number of Palestinian casualties is greater is that the Palestinian mobs attack the Israeli military in large numbers; soldiers, having to defend themselves and avoid being overrun, inevitably cause casualties in protecting themselves.

Just imagine your son or daughter being one of the Israeli soldiers. Howling mobs throwing rocks (yes, they hurt and kill!) attack the soldiers. From the unseen depths of the attacking mob come gunfire, grenades, and flying bottles of flaming gasoline. What, if you were in charge, would you tell the Israeli soldiers to do? Respond, as they do now in most cases, with rubber bullets? Or would this be the time to use live ammunition? You know what the answer is.

Israel cannot permit this situation to continue indefinitely. And the way to stop it in an instant is for Mr. Arafat to give the word to do so.

Israel is a civilized and democratic country. The reality, because Israel is a civilized and democratic country, is that, rather than use "excessive force", Israel is using almost unbelievable restraint, in order to keep casualties to a very minimum. There can be no question that if any real force, let alone "excessive force", were used, the number of casualties would be many times greater. Remember what happened in Somalia? Under similar circumstances, the helicopters were called in and mercilessly gunned down the insurgents! Within minutes, hundreds were killed -- more casualties than in the many months that the Israeli military has allowed this uprising to continue.

Israel's restraint is based on its own valuation of human life, but also on a regard for world opinion, which, in this case, as so many times before, is ready to label Israelis the aggressors or, in the most execrable of tastes, to compare them to the Nazis.

Even though many have died so far in this intifada, the toll would have been much, much greater were it not for the restraint and the discipline of Israeli troops and the measured response policy of the Israeli government. In order to avoid provoking the Arabs, Israel has on occasion even refrained from bringing in helicopters to evacuate wounded soldiers.

Can you imagine what the response of government troops would be if such an uprising were to occur in any of the Arab countries -- say, Syria, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt? Many thousands would die. Ultimately, however, if this violence does not abate, Israel will indeed have to use adequate force (not "excessive force") to quell it, even at the risk of international condemnation. But it is clear that Israel cannot permit this situation to continue indefinitely. It must be stopped. And the way to stop it in an instant is for Mr. Arafat to give the word to do so. He has not done that so far. In fact, and because it serves his purposes, he is the key instigator.

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from having the government of the United States on record as requiring the destruction of nascent life and, what is worse, demanding the punishment of those who would act to preserve it by (feloniously!) giving it birth.

But the problem with the approach that targets only reproductive cloning (that is, the transfer of the embryo to a woman's uterus) is not only moral but also legal and strategic. A ban only on reproductive cloning would turn out to be unenforceable. Once cloned embryos were produced and available in laboratories and assisted-reproduction centers, it would be virtually impossible to control what was done with them. Biotechnical experiments take place in laboratories, hidden from public view, and, given the rise of high-stakes commerce in biotechnology, these experiments are concealed from the competition. Huge stockpiles of cloned human embryos could thus be produced and bought and sold without anyone knowing it. As we have seen with in vitro embryos created to treat infertility, embryos produced for one reason can be used for another reason: today "spare embryos" once created to begin a pregnancy are now used in research, and tomorrow clones created for research will be used to begin a pregnancy.

Assisted reproduction takes place within the privacy of the doctor-patient relationship, making outside scrutiny extremely difficult. Many infertility experts probably would obey the law, but others could and would defy it with impunity, their doings covered by the veil of secrecy that is the principle of medical confidentiality. Moreover, the transfer of embryos to begin a pregnancy is a simple procedure (especially compared with manufacturing the embryo in the first place), simple enough that its final steps could be self-administered by the woman, who would thus absolve the doctor of blame for having "caused" the illegal transfer. (I have in mind something analogous to Kevorkian's suicide machine, which was designed to enable the patient to push the plunger and the good "doctor" to evade criminal liability.)

Even should the deed become known, governmental attempts to enforce the reproductive ban would run into a swarm of moral and legal challenges, both to efforts aimed at preventing transfer to a woman and—even worse—to efforts seeking to prevent birth after transfer has occurred. A woman who wished to receive the embryo clone would no doubt seek a judicial restraining order, suing to have the law overturned in the name of a constitutionally protected interest in her own reproductive choice to clone. (The cloned child would be born before the legal proceedings were complete.) And should an "illicit clonal pregnancy" be discovered, no governmental agency would compel a woman to abort the clone, and there would be an understandable storm of protest should she be fined or jailed after she gives birth. Once the baby is born, there would even be sentimental opposition to punishing the doctor for violating the law—unless, of course, the clone turned out to be severely abnormal.

For all these reasons, the only practically effective and legally sound approach is to block human cloning at the start, at the production of the embryo clone. Such a ban can be rightly characterized not as interference with reproductive freedom, nor even as interference with scientific inquiry, but as an attempt to prevent the unhealthy, unsavory, and unwelcome manufacture of and traffic in human clones.

VI.

Some scientists, pharmaceutical companies, and bio-entrepreneurs may balk at such a comprehensive restriction. They want to get their hands on those embryos, especially for their stem cells, those pluripotent cells that can in principle be turned into any cells and any tissues in the body, potentially useful for transplantation to repair somatic damage. Embryonic stem cells need not come from cloned embryos, of course; but the scientists say that stem cells obtained from clones could be therapeutically injected into the embryo's adult "twin" without any risk of immunological rejection. It is the promise of rejection-free tissues for transplantation that so far has been the most successful argument in favor of experimental cloning. Yet new discoveries have shown that we can probably obtain the same benefits without embryo cloning. The facts are much different than they were three years ago, and the weight in the debate about cloning for research should shift to reflect the facts.

Numerous recent studies have shown that it is possible to obtain highly potent stem cells from the bodies of children and adults—from the blood, bone marrow, brain, pancreas, and, most recently, fat. Beyond all expectations, these non-embryonic stem cells have been shown to have the capacity to turn into a wide variety of specialized cells and tissues. (At the same time, early human therapeutic efforts with stem cells derived from embryos have produced some horrible results, the cells going wild in their new hosts and producing other tissues in addition to those in need of replacement. If an in vitro embryo is undetectably abnormal—as so often they are—the cells derived from it may also be abnormal.) Since cells derived from our own bodies are more easily and cheaply available than cells harvested from specially manufactured clones, we will almost surely be able to obtain from ourselves any needed homologous transplantable cells and tissues, without the need for egg donors or cloned embryonic copies of ourselves. By pouring our resources into *adult* stem cell research (or, more accurately, "non-embryonic" stem cell research), we can also avoid the morally and legally vexing issues in embryo research. And more to our present subject, by eschewing the cloning of embryos, we make the cloning of human beings much less likely.

A few weeks ago an excellent federal anti-cloning bill was introduced in Congress, sponsored by Senator Sam Brownback and Representative David Weldon. This carefully drafted legislation seeks to prevent the cloning of human beings at the very first step, by prohibiting somatic cell nuclear transfer to produce embryonic clones, and provides substantial criminal and monetary penalties for violating the law. The bill makes very clear that there is to be no interference with the scientific and medically useful practices of cloning DNA fragments (molecular cloning), with the duplication of somatic cells (or stem cells) in tissue culture (cell cloning), or with whole-organism or embryo cloning of non-human animals. If enacted, this law would bring the United States into line with the current or soon-to-be-enacted practices of many other nations. Most important, it offers us the best chance—the only realistic chance—that we have to keep human cloning from happening, or from happening much.

Getting this bill passed will not be easy. The pharmaceutical and biotech companies and some scientific and patient-advocacy associations may claim that the bill is the work of bio-Luddites: anti-science, a threat to free inquiry, an obstacle to obtaining urgently needed therapies for disease. Some feminists and pro-choice groups will claim that this legislation is really only a sneaky device for fighting *Roe* v. *Wade*, and they will resist anything that might be taken even to hint that a human embryo has any moral worth. On the other side, some right-to-life purists, who care not how babies are made as long as life will not be destroyed, will withhold their support because the bill does not take a position against embryo twinning or embryo research in general.

All of these arguments are wrong, and all of them must be resisted. This is not an issue of pro-life versus pro-choice. It is not

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about death and destruction, or about a woman's right to choose. It is only and emphatically about baby design and manufacture: the opening skirmish of a long battle against eugenics and against a post-human future. As such, it is an issue that should not divide "the left" and "the right"; and there are people across the political spectrum who are coalescing in the efforts to stop human cloning. (The prime sponsor of Michigan's comprehensive anti-cloning law is a pro-choice Democratic legislator.) Everyone needs to understand that, whatever we may think about the moral status of embryos, once embryonic clones are produced in the laboratories the eugenic revolution will have begun. And we shall have lost our best chance to do anything about it.

As we argue in the coming weeks about this legislation, let us be clear about the urgency of our situation and the meaning of our action or inaction. Scientists and doctors whose names we know, and probably many others whose names we do not know, are today working to clone human beings. They are aware of the immediate hazards, but they are undeterred. They are prepared to screen and to destroy anything that looks abnormal. They do not care that they will not be able to detect most of the possible defects. So confident are they in their rectitude that they are willing to ignore all future consequences of the power to clone human beings. They are prepared to gamble with the well-being of any live-born clones, and, if I am right, with a great deal more, all for the glory of being the first to replicate a human being. They are, in short, daring the community to defy them. In these circumstances, our silence can only mean acquiescence. To do nothing now is to accept the responsibility for the deed and for all that follows predictably in its wake.

I APPRECIATE THAT a federal legislative ban on human cloning is without American precedent, at least in matters technological. Perhaps such a ban will prove ineffective; perhaps it will eventually be shown to have been a mistake. (If so, it could later be reversed.) If enacted, however, it will have achieved one overwhelmingly important result, in addition to its contribution to thwarting cloning: it will place the burden of practical proof where it belongs. It will require the proponents to show very clearly what great social or medical good can be had only by the cloning of human beings. Surely it is only for such a compelling case, yet to be made or even imagined, that we should wish to risk this major departure—or any other major departure—in human procreation.

Americans have lived by and prospered under a rosy optimism about scientific and technological progress. The technological imperative has probably served us well, though we should admit that there is no accurate method for weighing benefits and harms. And even when we recognize the unwelcome outcomes of technological advance, we remain confident in our ability to fix all the "bad" consequences—by regulation or by means of still newer and better technologies. Yet there is very good reason for shifting the American paradigm, at least regarding those technological interventions into the human body and mind that would surely effect fundamental (and likely irreversible) changes in human nature, basic human relationships, and what it means to be a human being. Here we should not be willing to risk everything in the naïve hope that, should things go wrong, we can later set them right again.

Some have argued that cloning is almost certainly going to remain a marginal practice, and that we should therefore permit people to practice it. Such a view is shortsighted. Even if cloning is rarely undertaken, a society in which it is tolerated is no longer the same society—any more than is a society that permits (even small-scale) incest or cannibalism or slavery. A society that allows cloning, whether it knows it or not, has tacitly assented to the conversion of procreation into manufacture and to the treatment of children as purely the projects of our will. Willy-nilly, it has acquiesced in the eugenic re-design of future generations. The humanitarian superhighway to a Brave New World lies open before this society.

But the present danger posed by human cloning is, paradoxically, also a golden opportunity. In a truly unprecedented way, we can strike a blow for the human control of the technological project, for wisdom, for prudence, for human dignity. The prospect of human cloning, so repulsive to contemplate, is the occasion for deciding whether we shall be slaves of unregulated innovation, and ultimately its artifacts, or whether we shall remain free human beings who guide our powers toward the enhancement of human dignity. The humanity of the human future is now in our hands. ■

The Ghost Rutter

By ZOË HELLER

The Dying Animal by Philip Roth

(Houghton Mifflin, 156 pp., $23)

WHEN FIRST WE met Professor David Kepesh in 1972, in Philip Roth's novella *The Breast*, he was a junior academic who had recently awoken to find himself transformed into a one-hundred-fifty-five-pound female bosom. Later, Roth toyed with the notion of writing a sequel to *The Breast*, a book about Kepesh's experiences as a celebrity breast-at-large. (Kepesh was to tour America in a customized padded van, making appearances on *The Tonight Show*, fucking groupies with his outsize nipple, and so on.) But in the end—wisely, perhaps—the writer abandoned plans for this Mel Brooks-type riff, and the mammary episode was allowed to remain a discrete *sui generis* absurdity. When next Kepesh appeared, in *The Professor of Desire*, he was pre-metamorphosis, telling the story of the first half of his life. And now, in Roth's new novel, we find Kepesh in his winter years—no longer a breast, but confronting the hardly less scandalous transformation of old age.

Kepesh is seventy. His hair has turned white. His neck has acquired wattle. He has reached that moment in life when previously invisible body parts "start making themselves distressingly apparent." And yet he is not altogether reduced. For one thing, his libido remains intact. Unlike old Nathan Zuckerman, bleak and diapered in his Connecticut hideaway, Kepesh still wants—and still gets—a lot of sex. Professionally speaking, he is mostly occupied these days as a cultural pundit on National Public Radio and Channel 13, but he also gives a senior seminar in Practical Criticism at a New York college—a seminar attended largely by women; and this pedagogical sideline has proven a

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rich source of nubile sex partners. "The decades since the sixties have done a remarkable job of completing the sexual revolution," he can attest with gloating authority. "This is a generation of astonishing fellators."

The Dying Animal, which takes the form of a late-night sofa-side monologue delivered by Kepesh to a young companion, has quite a lot to say about the sexual revolution. Aside from converting Kepesh back into a forked creature, Roth has taken other liberties with biographical continuity and reconfigured the lackluster 1960s that Kepesh experienced in *The Professor of Desire* as a glorious decade of erotic adventure. Kepesh is now very proud of how he handled himself in those heady times. His boast is not so much that he abandoned a wife and a son to partake in the carnal festivities. (A lot of people did that, after all.) His particular genius, Kepesh contends, was to separate the era's vital idea of sexual liberty from the hippy-dippy psychedelic chaff, and to master "the discipline of freedom."

Sidestepping all the chaos, Kepesh rigorously plotted a "system" of hedonism, a system that has actually lasted. His confreres of old have all long since retired from the priapic crusade. One by one, they grew weary, fell back into line, succumbed to "the pathos of feminine need." But he, Kepesh, has kept on keeping on, proudly bearing the standard for emancipated manhood.

> Because only when you fuck is everything by which you are defeated in life purely, if momentarily revenged. Only then are you most cleanly alive and most cleanly yourself. It's not the sex that's the corruption—it's the rest. Sex isn't just friction and shallow fun. Sex is also the revenge on death.

In his defense of his "erotic birthright," Kepesh provides the usual Rothian portion of sparkling rant. His paeans to the vanguard girls of the '60s—the sassy females who "democratized the entitlement to pleasure"—have some rather gruesome purple moments. (His phrase about "a generation drawing their conclusions from their cunts" still haunts me.) Yet on the subject of the married world—the idiots who have opted for "the childishness of coupling"—his tirades are horridly funny. Unfair, naturally, but deliciously so.

> In one of the magazines, I read recently about a famous media couple married thirty-four years and the marvelous achievement of their learning to bear each other. Proudly the husband told the reporter, "My wife and I have a saying that you can tell the health of a marriage by the number of teeth marks on your tongue." I wonder, when I'm around such people, What are they being punished for? Thirty-four years. One stands in awe of the masochistic rigor required.

Against such righteous, unexamined convention-following, Kepesh sets the ruthless efficiency of his own arrangements. With his orderly Manhattan duplex, his books, his piano, his Kafka memorabilia, and his regular bouts of carnal pleasure, he is, he would have us believe, a man who has finally resolved the question of how to live.

Of course, since Kepesh is a Rothian protagonist, and bound to self-incriminate, the problems with him and his "system" are not so difficult to spot. By his own admission, others have had to pay a steep price for his freedom. His son Kenny was the first and the most notable sacrifice to his sensual ambitions ("I knew I could take only myself over the wall"); and if Kenny has grown up to be a wounded, suffering, "ridiculous" adult, it is largely Kepesh's own doing. "The consequences of being what I am are long term," he observes. "These domestic disasters are dynastic."

There have been other casualties, too. Those sexy pioneer women of the '60s whom he celebrates so fulsomely have not fared particularly well in the revolution's aftermath. From time to time, they turn up at his door, ex-girlfriends in middle age, seeking refuge from the grim millennial dating scene. They sit forlornly on his couch, telling their war stories and wondering plaintively if they have missed the boat for family life and kids. Sometimes they cry. Sometimes Kepesh magnanimously allows them to stay the night. It never occurs to him, as it is surely meant to occur to us, that their loneliness might be a legacy of precisely the era that he hallows. His only thought is to chide them for their maternal urges ("the standard unthinking"), and to privately lament how poorly they have aged.

ALL OF THIS would be indictment enough, perhaps. But the hardest knock of all to the Kepesh way is yet to come, in the story that he tells of his affair with a Cuban-American woman named Consuela Castillo. She is a classic Rothian sex goddess—a *belle dame sans merci* with pornographic underwear. She is one of his Practical Criticism finds; he met her eight years ago, when she was twenty-four. The fact that Consuela is not the sharpest knife in the drawer, and that her interest in cultural matters is restricted to a sort of genteel, middlebrow reverence ("I marvel at the arts," she tells Kepesh, like one of those women in the television ads for *The New York Times*), only underscores the magnificence of her bedroom genius.

She has "a polished forehead of a smooth, Brancusi elegance." She has sleek pubic hair. She has characterful genitalia. (When she comes, Kepesh explains with connoisseurial diligence, her vulva gets pushed out, "like a bivalve's soft, unsegmented, bubbling-forth body.") And—lest we imagine that the bosom business has altogether been put to rest—it just so happens that the most compelling of Consuela's many compelling features is her luscious, gargantuan embonpoint. That's right, the breasts—documented variously as "a D cup," "powerful, beautiful breasts," "gorgeous breasts," "really big, beautiful breasts," "round, full, perfect—the type with a nipple like a saucer . . . the big, pale, rosy-brown nipple that is so very stirring," "the tits—the beautiful tits"—are what really do Kepesh in.

In the beginning, the affair with Consuela proceeds along standard Kepeshian lines: perfectly gratifying to the professor and perfectly unthreatening. The decisive moment occurs one night after Kepesh—feeling a bit bored—has straddled Consuela and "fucked her mouth" with particular ferocity. Consuela, still recumbent, glares at him and snaps her teeth. "Suddenly. Cruelly. At me. It wasn't an act. It was instinctive. . . . The instinctual girl bursting not just the container of her vanity but the captivity of her cozy Cuban home."

WITH THIS GESTURE, Kepesh is transported back into his—and his creator's—favorite territory: the primordial swamp of gender warfare, the chaos of eros. He finds himself in love—or at least in the neurotic maelstrom that Roth's heroes take for love. Once toppled from his professorial plinth, there is no end to his humiliation. On one occasion, he is driven to kneeling before his menstruating lady-love and "licking her clean." The relationship officially ended six years ago, but Kepesh's enthrallment did not end with it. Even now, he is not fully recovered from Consuela's spell. Recently she has re-appeared in his life, reviving his obsession and complicating it with the grim news—irony of ironies!—that she has breast cancer.

Clearly Consuela is the embarrassment of Kepesh's grandiose sexual philosophy. Sex is not freedom with a woman like her. It is a primrose path to the comedy of attachment, to the constraining anguish of feelings.

> No, not even fucking can stay totally pure

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> and protected. And this is where I fail.... When two dogs fuck there appears to be purity. *There*, we think, is pure fucking, among the beasts. But should we discuss it with them, we would probably find that even among dogs there are, in canine form, these crazy distortions of longing, doting, possessiveness, even of love.

Nor is sex really revenge on death. For what is the ailing Consuela if not the ultimate femme fatale—the very emblem of Eros and Thanatos intertwined? And as for sex being the expression of one's truest self—well, Consuela's terrible power is precisely to make Kepesh *not* himself, to deform him with jealousy, and turn him from a languid professor of desire into a frenzied little boy. "I was at her feet," he says of the menstruation incident. "I was on the floor. My own face was pressed to her flesh like a feeding infant's, so I could see nothing of hers."

Considering what a seigneurial fuss he has kicked up over the years about his blow jobs, we may feel that Kepesh makes rather too much of consuming a young woman's bodily fluids—of allowing her, as one of his horrified friends puts it, to "penetrate" him. This is, after all, a man who started falling out of love with Claire Ovington in *The Professor of Desire* the moment she shyly confessed that she did not much care for swallowing his semen. Even the wondrous Consuela is initially faulted for the crudeness of her oral technique. ("The instant I began coming, she abruptly stopped and received it like an open drain. I could have been coming into a wastepaper basket.") Frankly, given his history, Kepesh would have to down several tankards of menstrual blood before carping would be in order.

THE FACT IS that a Kepesh mortified and brought low by love is still a pretty awful and pompous Kepesh—still a Kepesh intent on asserting his intellectual and sexual dominance at all times. Consuela slays him, but she never succeeds in murdering his self-regard. Even when he is paying homage to her sublime beauty, he cannot resist inserting himself as the man responsible for unleashing that beauty's potency. She is, he notes, echoing Ezra Pound's lordly kiss-off to H.D., "not the artist but the art itself"—a woman without self-awareness; a gorgeous phenomenon who acquires significance or meaning only when seen by him.

> She had only to be there, on view, and the understanding of her importance flowed from me. It was not required of her, any more than it is of a violin concerto or of the moon, that she have any sort of self-conception.... I was Consuela's awareness of herself.... I was the author of her mastery of me.

Now, Roth is not always easy to pin down on these matters; but in this instance it seems safe to say that he is wise to the piggishness of his man. Kepesh's Consuelan reveries are not so different from the drool that Zuckerman and Tarnopol and Portnoy have spilled on various demonic wantons over the years. And yet they are different enough to send up a flare. Kepesh's crowing over "tits" is too emphatically banal. His objectification of Consuela is too textbook. His vanity is too incorrigible and too unwitting. (If Roth were not keen to establish a little distance from his hero, would he outfit him with "an important page-boy" of white hair, a foulard, and a Porsche?) This incarnation of Kepesh—much like the original Kepesh-as-breast—is a reductio ad absurdum of the hedonistic principle. Roth's prose reads like a feminist satire on the chauvinist male gaze.

Which is not to say that Roth offers Kepesh as merely a villain, or as merely a joke. If Roth's intention had been to portray a grotesque, he might simply have revived his old idea and given us Kepesh the Breast on *The Tonight Show*. No, this Kepesh, however profound his folly, is intended as a serious moral protagonist. The novella's title—taken from Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium"—would seem to assure us of that. "Consume my heart away; sick with desire/And fastened to a dying animal/It knows not what it is," Kepesh intones in the very depths of his lovesickness. The professor is no Yeats, of course; and there is little indication at any point in this narrative that he is truly ready to trade sensual music for the artifice of eternity. Yet the invocation of the great poet serves well enough as a sort of imprimatur on Kepeshian quandaries: a reminder that matters of high seriousness are at stake. Kepesh may be a creep, but for Roth he is also a doughty wayfarer in the human comedy, a man negotiating, with admirable vim, the conundrums created by his own lusts. He is, in other words, a hero.

Many years ago, Roth chose as the epigraph for his novel *Letting Go* a line from Wallace Stevens: "The unalterable necessity of being this unalterable animal." It should be abundantly clear by now that writing about the unalterable necessity of being this unalterable animal is itself an unalterable necessity for Philip Roth. He has been ploughing away at the impossible unruliness of male desire—the unresolvable antagonism of id and superego as embodied by twentieth-century American man—for the better part of fifty years. And still he cannot leave it alone. Still he is bent on applying his gorgeous style, his formidable and fractious intellect, to the same tiny patch of libidinal anguish. Rutting and fretting. Fretting and rutting. Not rutting enough. Really great rutting. (Angry, athletic horsey rides.) Rutting on the side. Nice girls who won't swallow. Sirens and sluts who bring chaos. Wives who burn the toast and then eat you alive. Age may not have withered Rothian man, but years ago custom began to stale his limited variety.

THE WRITER IS never to be confused with his creations, of course. Roth has entrained in his readers a dread of being caught in that solecism. He is not Kepesh. He is not even Zuckerman. But this cannot be the end of the matter. When a writer chooses to document a set of attitudes as exhaustively as Roth has done, he accords them a certain weight and a certain worth. To hold Roth accountable for the dispiriting strain of woman-hatred and womanphobia that runs through his novels is not idly to confuse Roth with his characters. It is, rather, to acknowledge that one of the areas in which a writer most nakedly asserts himself or herself is in the choice of subject. Roth's implied moral commentary on Kepesh is all very well, but if he did not believe that an old goat's agonizing about a pneumatic twenty-four-year-old was not somehow representative of the human dilemma—was not deserving of our sympathetic attention—he wouldn't be writing about it, would he?

Were Roth's artistry less fine, the deficiencies of the sexual worldview on which he focuses would be less cruelly felt. But here is one of the most accomplished writers in America, a writer who has chosen to make sex and sexual relations one of his big themes—and his female characters rarely, if ever, transcend the realm of Freudian phantasm or adolescent cartoon. His depictions of sex are only a serial case study in the *vagina dentata* complex. This is not a "political" failing. It is a failing of empathy—a failing, actually, of literature. The remedy would not be an anodyne "correctness" or a sudden slew of characters conceived as "role models." All that is really required is an extension of Roth's humane interest and imaginative sympathy for the female half of the species.

There are, one knows, readers who do not see, or are not troubled by, Roth's woman problem. But even for these readers, *The Dying Animal* is likely to carry with it a whiff of bathos. Coming as it does after the richness and the ambi-

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tion of Roth's American trilogy (*American Pastoral*, *I Married a Communist*, *The Human Stain*), this short novel has a strong sense of contraction and retrenchment. The most loyal admirer of Roth may feel a certain weary foreboding when she or he comes upon Kepesh, in his second paragraph, unctuously confiding that he is "very vulnerable to female beauty."

Actually, there is some indication that Roth has anticipated this reaction, that he has understood the impatience that his thematic obsession inspires and has cleverly sought to address it. This is a book, after all, *about* sexual recidivism; its very subject is an old dog's refusal to let his favorite bone lie. It is not unduly fanciful to detect in Kepesh's account of his unmonastic old age the stentorian tones of Roth himself:

> Look, I'm not of this age. You can see that. You can hear that. I achieved my goal with a blunt instrument. I took a hammer to domestic life and those who stand watch over it.... That I'm still a hammerer should be no surprise. Nor is it a surprise that my insistence makes me a comic figure on the order of the village atheist to you who are of the current age and who haven't had to insist on any of this.

It is a pre-emptive defense of sorts, but it is hardly an apology. *This is my thing*, it says. *If you don't like it, don't read it.* If Kepesh has any wisdom to offer us, it lies in his slightly horrified acknowledgment that "nothing, nothing is put to rest, however old a man may be." The saga, it seems, continues. The dying animal will be with us unto death. ■

Problematizing Evil

By DAVID RIEFF

When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda by Mahmood Mamdani

(Princeton University Press, 364 pp., $29.95)

I.

MANY BAD BOOKS are published every year, but few are bad in a morally and intellectually instructive way. At first glance, such books appear to have much to recommend them: they confront important themes and are written by intelligent people, sometimes even by learned people. They are merely spectacularly wrong. Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* are examples of this dubious (and often quite influential) genre. And now Mahmood Mamdani's study of the Rwandan genocide must be added to the unfortunate list.

Mamdani is a Ugandan-born scholar and a rising star in left-leaning African intellectual circles and in the African studies departments of Western universities. Having taught in Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa, he is now the head of the Institute of African Studies at Columbia University and the president of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, a think tank based in Senegal with somewhat old-fashioned pan-Africanist leanings. In his writings Mamdani has cast his net widely, and has shown no hesitation in taking on subjects that, by his own admission, he came to with very little background.

Mamdani published an important study of the politics of demography in India, and also several books on Ugandan politics, before producing his most important work, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, in 1996. In this book he advanced the provocative thesis that post-colonial African states reproduced the archetypal form of colonial governance—indirect rule through the so-called Native Authority, which largely allowed local inhabitants to do the dirty work of the colonizers for them. Mamdani's name for the system was "decentralized despotism," and it inflamed him.

It was a highly speculative claim. It treated British colonialism as the model, which it was not (the French empire in Africa was based on highly centralized structures of authority); and it treated Lord Lugard's regime in Nigeria as the paradigm for all British possessions on the subcontinent, which it was not. And onto this flawed framework Mamdani heaped the still more fanciful contention that the generic form of the colonial state was South Africa in the age of apartheid. The fact that apartheid as a system was installed only two decades before decolonization did not trouble Mamdani. In his theory-laden, history-deprived account, apartheid is not a historical event, but a concept latent in South Africa from the early nineteenth century. In this way he elided the obvious difference between South Africa after the Boer War, when it was a dominion of the British Commonwealth, and South Africa after the Afrikaners had installed their particular brand of racism.

MAMDANI'S THEORY PUT one in mind of Herbert Marcuse's old crack that if the facts do not fit the theory, so much the worse for the facts. For he was defending a theory that few historians, black or white, have endorsed. (I said historians, not political activists or literary theorists.) South Africa's history of economic development, which was unique on the continent, is for Mamdani only one "perspective." Shift the focus to the way the institution of the so-called Native Authority determined the nature of colonial rule, Mamdani argues, and South Africa becomes an "unexceptional" African country whose experience is colonial in the same sense that Kenya's experience or Nigeria's experience was colonial. But that is like saying that if you shift the focus in eighteenth-century English history from the industrial revolution to aristocratic privilege, England looks like an unexceptional European country: so it does, which is why the shift in perspective should not be made. Mamdani's account of apartheid utterly omits its reality as a variety not of colonialism but (as Wole Soyinka has pointed out) of Boer separatism and nationalism.

It is to Mamdani's credit, I suppose, that he confronts directly the issue of the peculiarity of his viewpoint in the introduction to *Citizen and Subject*. "I am painfully aware," he writes, "of the arduous labor of generations of researchers that has gone into the making of South African studies: someone new to the field must tread gingerly and modestly." Except himself, of course, for he quickly adds: "Yet we all know of the proverbial child who combines audacity with the privilege of seeing things anew: perhaps this child's only strength is to take notice when the emperor has no clothes on." Actually, it isn't. And this child seems to think that *nobody* has any clothes on, other than himself.

Mamdani never asks himself why, if the persistence of British-style decentralized

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despotism in post-colonial Africa is the explanation for Africa's contemporary difficulties, the French colonial experience of a centralized state led to the same problems. In the words of A. Adu Boahen, the Ghanaian scholar who was the animating spirit behind the UNESCO General History of Africa series, "Some of the imperial powers made use of existing traditional rulers. The British certainly did with their system of indirect rule. The French, on the other hand, abolished most of the ruling dynasties." So on examination each system of decentralized despotism turns out to have been significantly different. How is it that different colonial legacies produced a similar post-colonial outcome? The answer must be that colonialism does not explain the entirety, or even the majority, of post-colonial life.

Even the specific nature of British indirect rule in places such as northern Nigeria and Uganda is not quite as clear as Mamdani seems to imagine. As the African historian Michael Chege observed in a review of *Citizen and Subject*:

> it may be prudent not to overemphasize the African novelty of using local rulers to buttress colonial rule for the use of native auxiliaries has been inherent in the definition of colonialism through the ages. The archetypal model of Lugard's policy of using native rulers in the British empire was India, and its political sequel after India's independence in 1947 was very different from the institutional depravity that informs much of Africa today.

And Chege added that "strictly speaking, if apartheid and the politics of indirect rule are equated, then apartheid was the norm not just in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Nigeria, but also in colonial India, Northern Ireland after the seventeenth century, and Native American reservations after the heyday of the US Cavalry."

In any case, for a writer whose intemperate denunciations are reserved for outsiders who view the African scene with pessimism, Mamdani's emphasis on this crippling legacy has an oddly pessimistic ring of its own. To be sure, there is much in present-day Africa that justifies pessimism; but the notion that decades after decolonization the African political impasse can be laid at colonialism's door has the effect of robbing Africa's leaders, citizens, and subjects of their historical agency, of their moral autonomy. Surely the fate of the tormented societies of Africa will be determined more by leadership than by legacy. The past survives into the present, but the present is much more than the past.

Mamdani's new book is an effort to apply the arguments of his previous book to the Rwandan catastrophe of 1994—an event that would seem to call for qualities of modesty, tentativeness, and careful empirical research in a writer. But these are not the qualities of *When Victims Become Killers*. And as in his introduction to *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani, far from being troubled by these failings, all but brags about them. In the first few paragraphs of his book, he concedes that, growing up in neighboring Uganda, "Rwanda was seldom part of [his or his family's] lived reality." By his own admission, he did not visit Rwanda until half a year or more after the genocide, even though the place was crawling with reporters and aid workers and it would have been easy for Mamdani to have gone. And he did not speak French, only learning it, as he recounts, to write his book.

Such ignorance would be excusable—after all, many journalists are similarly unknowledgeable and language-poor when they begin an assignment—were Mamdani not so determined to assert the superiority of his own approach to that of foreign (he means European and North American) scholars, to whom he refers derisively as "area studies" experts. This is a fairly banal prejudice, of course, among politically correct professors in political science and international relations, who hold that "area studies" is a sinister academic exercise in neo-colonialist domination. A typical formulation—I choose one among many—may be found in an essay by a sociologist named Ravi Arvind Palat, who teaches at SUNY-Binghamton, called (typically, again) "Fragmented Visions: Excavating the Future of Area Studies in a Post-American World." He writes that the constitution of area studies "as a field of study was directly related to the rise of the United States to a hegemonic position in the capitalist world economy in the aftermath of the Second World War." The fact that area studies exists in other parts of the world, and flourished also in the Soviet empire, little concerns Palat (any more than Russian orientalism or German orientalism long detained Said). It is "the ethnocentric biases inherent in the basic organizing principles of the Western academy" that Palat is determined to unmask.

Alas, Mamdani is not much better. "The encounter with Rwanda," he writes in the preface to his book, as he narrates its genesis in his own mind, "gradually turned into one with Rwanda experts [and] it fed my own growing discontent with the methodological underpinnings of area studies." One might have thought that trying to come to terms with the third

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great genocide of the twentieth century might have eclipsed this parochial seminar-room "discontent." And Mamdani explains more: area studies "sees state boundaries as boundaries of knowledge, thereby turning political into epistemological boundaries. Even when radical area studies [so "area studies" is fine when it is "radical"!] linked developments in the colony to those in imperial centers, it did not cross boundaries between colonies. It soon became clear to me that just because the genocide took place within the boundaries of Rwanda, it did not mean that either the dynamics that led to it or the dynamics it unleashed in turn are confined to Rwanda."

But area studies has generally been concerned not with individual countries but with regions and sub-regions. Almost every serious scholar of Rwanda has been painfully aware of the regional context. Indeed, if Rwanda has produced an area studies tradition, it has been identified with the study of the Great Lakes region of Africa: Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Congo, and (more controversially) even southern Uganda and western Tanzania. The regional character of the genocide was clear already in its beginnings: it was directly triggered by an event in which the Rwandan president *and* the Burundian president were killed, when the executive jet in which they were flying was shot down as it approached Kigali, the Rwandan capital. It is a truism of Great Lakes history that from the colonial period onward the fate of Rwanda has been twinned with the fate of Burundi, and with crucially linked events in the Kivu region of eastern Congo, and with historical and political developments in twentieth-century Uganda. So Mamdani's "realization" was something that every serious student of the region had always known. This basic historical truth was not awaiting discovery, and there was no need to excavate it from the occluded mounds of Rwandan area studies.

Mamdani may believe that his book has broken through "the rules of area studies where every 'expert' must cultivate his or her own 'local' patch, where geography is forever fixed by contemporary boundaries," but this is true of virtually every strenuous study of the subject. And Mamdani must know this, since in what he calls his "critical appropriation of existing literature"—that is, of all the books about Rwandan history that provide so many of the sources for his own narrative reconstruction—he could hardly not have noticed that most serious books about Rwanda do not limit themselves in the caricatural way he suggests. The most important of these sources, such as Gerard Prunier's magisterial *The Rwanda Crisis*, and Filip Reyntjens's more controversial *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise*, and René Lemarchand's valuable if somewhat dated interpretive survey *Rwanda and Burundi*, are every bit as informed by the regional context as Mamdani's own book.

What Mamdani really finds lacking in the literature, I suspect, is its general failure to adopt his brand of political engagement. So many of these fine books, after all, were written neither by Africans nor by leftists. When, for example, Mamdani taxes these area studies experts (he does not name a single name) for viewing local intellectuals such as himself as "competitors," one cannot help feeling that the sense of competitiveness resides with himself rather than with them. In fact, he could not even have begun his own book without the work of these writers. Perhaps it is for the purpose of disguising the magnitude of his own debt that Mamdani refers to the need of African intellectuals to liberate themselves "from the shackles of area studies," as if these books and these scholars were simply trying to enforce some neo-colonial hegemony.

Mamdani insists that his book breaks new ground because it is "more than just an attempt to dig up new facts by expanding the scale of investigation; rather, it is an attempt to rethink existing facts in the light of rethought contexts, thereby to illuminate old facts and core realities in a new light." The problem is that Mamdani's grasp of these facts is quite uncertain at times. Perhaps his belated acquisition of French led him to omit important books written in that language that might have saved him from mistakes of fact and interpretation. He does not include any of the works on Rwanda, Zaire, and Burundi by the brilliant Belgian scholar-journalist Colette Braeckman. He appears not to have read the official report of the French army and the parliamentary foreign affairs commission that appeared last year. Nor does he seem to know the important series of interviews with Father André Sibomana that were taped in Jerusalem and published in Paris in 1997 as *Gardons Espoir Pour le Rwanda*. Sibomana, who died in mysterious circumstances a year later, had the distinction of being a lucid critic of the old Hutu Power regime that unleashed the genocide *and* the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front that brought the genocide to an end by force in the summer of 1994 and since then has steadily tightened its monolithic grip on power. Yet if Mamdani's bibliography is strangely partial where Rwandan history is concerned, he is at pains to list such works as Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political* and Joseph Stalin's *Marxism and the National Question* (yes, that Joseph Stalin!) and Hegel's *The Philosophy of Right* and Mao Tse-tung's "Analysis of

Sky and River, Net and Open Book

Four o'clock. Five. Low air soft as a glove.
Thunderheads. Throbbing rays of understood
sun. Gunmetal and dove-silken sky.
The river a broad path of dappled light.
Downstream, the stern of the Intrepid
just like a dinosaur's neck.
North and east a seagull soars
over a softball game. And at my feet—
I'm sitting on a block of pebbly cement—
long-stemmed white carnations, one, two, three,
drift on the greenish current,
floating memorials to a farewell
or celebration or other passage.

A little ring of silver on one toe,
my barefoot friend, behind me on the block,
caught in a net of obligations
(as who is not) stirs; settles
if not quite comfortably in her mesh
then not, for now, too chafingly. Alert
as a bright-eyed bird, albeit a bird
lighting a mentholated cigarette,
she looks out at the river and the sky
(or I assume she looks; she sits behind me),
exactly as—untangled this long mild
afternoon of brilliance behind cloud
from that net, instead suspended, swaying
somewhere (as also who is not) above
an open book, a narrative whose end
is today unknowable, unknown,
how near, how far, oh simply *how*—do I.

Rachel Hadas

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the Classes in Chinese Society."

One of the worst of Mamdani's failures of understanding comes in his discussion of the Catholic Church in colonial Rwanda. It does not appear that Mamdani has read the relevant memoirs by churchmen of the period. Instead, as usual in his account of Rwandan history, he derives his account purely from secondary sources, and repeats some of their errors. Thus, to cite only one example, his account of the causes behind the Church's decision, in the aftermath of World War II, to withdraw its support from the dominant Tutsi minority and throw it behind the aspirations of the Hutu majority, includes the assertion that this shift was owed to the fact that the new Belgian priests coming to Rwanda were Walloons from *le petit clergé*, unlike the "upper-class Flemish men" who had been prominent before the war. In fact, the reverse is true, as Mamdani should have known from Colette Braeckman's *Terreur Africaine*, an account of the roots of political violence in Rwanda, Burundi, and Zaire (now Congo). After World War II, as Braeckman shows, working-class and lower-middle-class Flemish priests began to replace the Walloons who had predominated before 1945. The issue was, in any case, less one of class—as Mamdani supposes—than one of ethnicity. These Flemish priests viewed themselves as part of an oppressed majority, and they tended to transpose relations between Flemings such as themselves, who in Belgium in those years were comparatively disenfranchised politically, and the dominant Walloons, to the crisis that pitted Tutsis against Hutus. For them, the Hutus, too, were an oppressed majority.

Given Mamdani's sloppiness about facts, his insistent denigration of the efforts of the fact-gatherers is especially grotesque. After all, he did very little reporting himself. His account of the actual perpetration of the genocide is about fifteen pages long, and it contains interviews with Tutsis whom he met in Kigali, including some of his ex-students from Makerere University in Kampala. (Mamdani confesses that he did not realize at the time that they were Rwandan!) There are no interviews with *génocidaires* from the Hutu political elite, whom he could easily have met by travelling to any of the numerous African cities—Kinshasa, Lusaka, Brazzaville—in which so many of them installed themselves after fleeing Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide. He also might have encountered the ordinary Hutus who provided the shock troops of the slaughter, the killers about whose motives he speculates at such length. They are everywhere in Rwanda, from the overcrowded prisons in which they rot to almost any village in the country.

Mamdani may believe that local scholars and intellectuals such as himself "know no boundaries" in their pursuit of knowledge, but in this globalized, post-everything world of happy porousness his own curiosity seems curiously restrained. Perhaps this is why his account of the Rwandan catastrophe is surprisingly conventional. In fact, if one cuts through the various theoretical excurses and the deadening pomo verbiage in which Mamdani trumpets his determination to "cross the boundaries" here or to "problematize" there, one finds pretty much what one already knew. While his interpretations are sometimes original, and sometimes tendentious, and sometimes eccentric, for the most part his account is the standard one.

II.

MAMDANI'S MILITANT quarrels with area studies, and his conviction that by writing *When Victims Become Killers* with a different set of methodological premises he has struck a blow for what he calls "intellectual decolonization," virtually ensure that if there is one subject in the book that is shortchanged, it is the subject of the genocide itself. He is quite unapologetic about this. He contrasts his book's immediate objective of making "the Rwandan genocide thinkable" with "a broader quest: What can the study of Africa teach us about late modern life?" And he prefers—excuse me, he privileges—the latter quest. Now, the desire to understand the genocide is admirable, and unobjectionable, and unoriginal, having been the motivation for scores of books on the genocide, from Philip Gourevitch's essential *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* to the scissors-and-paste jobs produced by Belgian and French journalists in profusion in 1995 and 1996. What is genuinely original, alas, is Mamdani's belief that the Rwandan genocide, which was one of the most terrible things that happened in the terrible twentieth century, can be turned into an instrument for studying "late modern life," whatever that is. He does not appear to grasp that modern life is much less of a perplexity than modern genocide.

It is no wonder that his account of genocide in general and the Rwandan genocide in particular is strangely perfunctory. About genocide as an historical phenomenon, his contribution is banal in the extreme: for example, that "the genocidal impulse to eliminate an enemy may indeed be as old as organized power." And of course he adduces the familiar biblical passage in which God enjoins Moses to exterminate the Midianites. He often takes refuge in pious, hapless paradoxes such as this one: "we may agree that genocidal violence cannot be understood as rational; yet, we need to understand it as thinkable." Well, yes, we do; but surely the past hundred years have taught us just how many kinds of rationality there are. Mamdani appears to be the last of the old-fashioned idealists who believe that evil can never have anything to do with reason.

If Mamdani's first impulse seems to be to recoil from the event with a shudder and to take refuge in the "why did the heavens not darken?" school of response, his second impulse is to re-invent the wheel. He goes to enormous lengths to demonstrate that masses of people are quite capable of endorsing mass murder; that genocide can be popular; and that educated people are quite as capable of behaving murderously as uneducated people. In other words, that human beings have an immense and probably inherent capacity for evil. These are all cruelly familiar propositions.

BUT NOT AS familiar, or as unoriginal, as Mamdani's "explanation" of the genocide, which consists of taking its "political backdrop" seriously. Mamdani's idea of an explanation for this evil is limned already in the title of his book, with its insistence that the Hutus, in their tens of thousands and perhaps even in their hundreds of thousands, who murdered both their Tutsi neighbors and those Hutus who opposed their government's genocidal project were themselves victims of colonial oppression. This analysis weirdly resembles the recent Polish attacks on Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors*, the awful argument that Poles in Jedwabne in 1941 could not have been victimizers because they were also victims. Obviously Mamdani is not inviting his readers to sympathize with the genocide; but on a certain level he is inviting his readers to feel the historical pain of the *génocidaires*.

To do so, Mamdani must part company with traditional accounts of Rwandan history on a crucial point. While not idealizing Tutsi domination in pre-colonial times or in its distorted, colonially inspired form during Belgian rule, the traditional version condemns the immediate "First Republic" of Grégoire Kayibanda, which was established in the aftermath of independence, and the "Second Republic" of General Juvenal Habyarimana, which was established in 1973, as totalitarian and racist states. For Mamdani, by contrast, the "saving grace" of the Hutu revolution of 1959 that ushered in Kayibanda's dictatorship was its commitment

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to majoritarian democracy, economic redistribution, and social justice. To be sure, he is aware that this movement for "justice" was predicated on the idea of taking power from the Tutsi minority that had ruled Rwanda and awarding it to the Hutu minority; or the idea that justice was a zero-sum game. (And therefore, one would think, not really justice at all.) But he insists that what took place in the aftermath of Rwanda was more than just turning the world upside down. "I find it important," he writes, "to take the revolution seriously, not to embrace it nor to shake it off, but to understand its limitations in spite of its real gains."

But all the analysts of the revolution of 1959 have already taken it seriously. They have merely refused to take its claims for itself at face value. Indeed, most recent scholarship has tended to share Gerard Prunier's conclusion that "what would later be touted as a 'social revolution' resembled more an ethnic transfer of power." In any case, as Mamdani would know had he looked more carefully at the Nazi revolution of the 1930s, there is no necessary incompatibility between emancipatory social rhetoric and genocidal racism. Indeed, totalitarian regimes often depend on populist policies to secure the allegiance of the mass of their citizens.

In any case, even Mamdani is forced to make essentially the same point Prunier made, but in somewhat different language. "For the postrevolutionary power that was the First Republic," he writes, "Rwanda was exclusively a Hutu state. The rationale for this was disarmingly simple, disarmingly so because it simply turned upside down the logic of the colonial state: the Hutus were indigenous, the Tutsi were alien." Here he is on solid ground, certainly more so than when he downplays the totalitarian character of Habyarimana's Second Republic. Indeed, he painstakingly shows the ways in which, at least until they abruptly switched sides in the run-up to independence in the 1950s, the Belgian colonial authorities had treated the Tutsis not simply preferentially (as the British had done with their system of indirect rule) but also as "a nonindigenous civilizing influence."

This is the best part of Mamdani's book. For once, he lays down the rhetorical bludgeon and explicates with force and subtlety the forging of both Hutu and Tutsi identity. The key, for Mamdani, is that the Hutu revolutionaries and the Tutsi elite that they overthrew had both come to accept the racialized definition of their identities that the Belgians had imposed. The question of whether Hutu and Tutsi are ethnic, racial, or caste identities, or even economic or cultural identities, will probably never be resolved; but the Belgians were persuaded that the Tutsis belonged to a superior "Hamitic" race. This construction defined the course of post-independence history in Rwanda. As Mamdani points out, by construing the difference as racial rather than ethnic, the Tutsis were transformed from an ethnic minority into an alien race, and the battle between Hutu and Tutsi replicated the one between white settler and native African. It became a race war.

It is always useful to explicate the origins of political identities; but the problem with political identities, however manufactured and contingent, is that once they have taken hold of people's imaginations, they are very difficult to counteract. Anyone who visits Rwanda has seen how the post-ethnic rhetoric of citizenship employed by the ruling (and Tutsi-dominated) Rwandan Patriotic Front is viewed as a sham by most ordinary Hutus, who believe that it is a ruse by which the small Tutsi minority can continue to maintain its dominance. And perhaps, on a certain level, it is. For the Tutsis, as Mamdani shows, likewise believed in their own superiority and in their own right to rule.

Here, again, Mamdani is at his best as he explores the various conceptions of what it has meant, historically, politically, and culturally, to be a Hutu or a Tutsi. But too often his wish to "problematize" these meanings leads him to a position that is far too conciliatory toward the masses who killed. "The 1959 Revolution," he writes in an astonishing passage, "was the antidote to Tutsi privilege that had crystallized between the time of Rwabugiri [a pre-colonial Tutsi ruler] and the end of the colonial period, just as Hutu Power was the antidote to the Hamitic hypothesis that provided the civilizational rationale for Tutsi Power. Hutu Power had undertones of a subaltern ideology, similar to Black Power in the United States, Black Consciousness in South Africa, or Dalit Power in India." A subaltern ideology: in other words, something progressive, something with emancipatory potential. There are echoes here of the old illusion about the emancipatory power of violence carried out by the oppressed against their oppressors. This is one of the many passages in which Mamdani's analysis becomes little more than Fanonism run amok. (Another such passage is Mamdani's assertion that the Hutu masses killed "not only as a continuation and culmination of the civil war but also as a defense of the revolution.")

Horrified as he is by the genocide, Mamdani seems unable to stop himself from going out of his way to understand the motivation of the Hutu masses and, as the title of his book expresses so resonantly, to persist in seeing the killers as victims in their own right. For this reason, he must insist that Hutu Power was not the same as the ideology of those who carried out the genocide, even though they (and most Rwandans) understood their ideology to be just that. Mamdani insists on viewing the Habyarimana regime as essentially progressive, when in truth it was even more anti-Tutsi than its predecessor, and made its concessions to power-sharing under duress (Rwanda had grown completely dependent on foreign development assistance) and under increasing military pressure from the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Habyarimana himself remained an unreconstructed anti-Tutsi fanatic.

After the genocide, the American journalist Scott Peterson visited Habyarimana's home in his native city of Ruhengeri. There he found prominently displayed "a grainy black-and-white view of Tutsi huts on a hillside, in flames and coughing up columns of smoke." As Peterson observed, "like a historical artifact—revered obviously as an example for future generations—it had been carefully labeled 'Apocalypse revolution—Nov. 1959,'" to honor the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy." Problematize *that*. Peterson's anecdote captures the reality of Hutu Power far more accurately than Mamdani's jesuitical hair-splitting.

Mamdani is right to insist that Rwanda is at a historical crossroads, that its political leadership faces the choice between "a continuation of the civil war" and "political reconciliation." Yet Mamdani's belief that Hutu Power is somehow a political position that can be accepted by its victims simply does not coincide with reality. As Mamdani himself remarks, "Rwanda's key dilemma is how to build a democracy that can incorporate a guilty majority alongside an aggrieved and fearful minority in a single political community." This majority is not guilty in the way that innocent bystanders (such as the European nations during World War II) are guilty. This majority is guilty not because it approved the killing, but because it killed. Mamdani knows this, but in the end he shies away from its implications by pretending that Hutu Power is simply another political tendency. It is nothing of the sort, anymore than was Nazism, which also had its social revolutionary side.

We may carry the analogy further. Mamdani's version of Rwandan national reconciliation, and the path out of the current impasse, is on a par with proposing in Germany in 1945 that Nazis be

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included in the new government. After all, the claim that Mamdani makes about Rwanda could have been made about Germany: that Nazism enjoyed the support of the majority of the German population. Mamdani may have chosen to believe that this solution was as viable in Rwanda as it had been in Uganda when, after Yoweri Museveni's victory, loyalists from both Idi Amin's and Milton Obote's dictatorships were brought in, or in South Africa, where, as he put it, all political tendencies from Black Power to White Power were permitted. But there was an essential difference: in Rwanda, a genocide had been planned and carried out in the name of Hutu Power. In Mamdani's account the fact that the Hutus had been the oppressed in precolonial and colonial Rwanda gave them some kind of special dispensation, if only for the historian.

In the introduction to *When Victims Become Killers*, he writes that "most obviously, [Rwanda] was a metaphor for postcolonial political violence. Less obviously, it was a postcolonial challenge, a vantage point to think through the postcolonial crisis." But why is the Rwandan genocide a metaphor for "the postcolonial crisis"? To make such a claim is to leech the event of its tragic specificity, to put it to uses that distort it or profane it. Moreover, Rwanda is not as typical as Mamdani seems to think. One of the striking things about Rwanda, as the area specialists whom Mamdani scorns have pointed out, is the extent to which so many elements in its history, including the ideological underpinnings of its independence crisis, diverge from African norms.

When all is said and done, Mamdani's book is the work of an old-fashioned Kwame Nkrumah or Amilcar Cabral–style pan-Africanist, a throwback to assumptions that have had little political validity since the 1960s. His historical premises and his political opinions have little to do with today's African realities. For the primary intellectual disservice to Africa is to treat it in pan-African terms. By thinking continentally, Mamdani is thinking unconcretely; and by hewing to his single model—the survival of the Native Authority and the native-settler dichotomy—Mamdani demeans the actual history of the actual place called Rwanda. The story of the Rwandan genocide deserves better. And so do the other stories of Africa. ■

Lights, Camera, Hatred

By STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II by Steven Alan Carr

(Cambridge University Press, 336 pp., $24.95)

THE TERM "anti-Semitism" was coined by a German journalist named Wilhelm Marr in a pamphlet attacking Jewish participation in politics. That was in 1873, which is odd. What had the phenomenon been called through all the preceding centuries? Almost two thousand years earlier, Josephus cited it as recognizable during the Egyptian exile even earlier. Strange that an animus of such longevity had to wait so long for a convenient tag.

Whatever it was previously called, it has survived. History demonstrates that, whatever its degree of visibility, anti-Semitism has persisted—in Western societies, anyway—at least since the dispersion of the Jews. It waxes and wanes, for reasons that generally have little to do with Jewish behavior; but even in the most equanimous societies, sometimes in those with few or no Jews in them, only the insistently wide-eyed could maintain that no amount of delving would uncover a streak of the virus. The reasons for this persistent animosity have often been explored, but no exploration has led to its disappearance.

Since it has been in some measure omnipresent, it arrived in America with the first Europeans. Amid the Dutch settlers, as Michael Kammen reports in *People of Paradox*, a clergyman was concerned about what would happen "if the obstinate and immovable Jews came to settle there." When the United States was founded, its Constitution enounced sterling egalitarian principles, but who would maintain that they have been invariably followed? Not the "obstinate and immovable Jews." (The American tolerance of slavery is another contradiction, and another story.)

American enterprise flourished through the nineteenth century, and since Jewish Americans were busy in many of its industries, anti-Semitism became a component of the American ethos. Anyone who doubts this can look at issues of *Life* (I mean the original humorous magazine of that name) around the beginning of the twentieth century. For the modern reader, the shock is not only the viciousness of the anti-Semitic jokes, but also the fact that they were accepted—more, expected. (Recall the attitudes tacitly surrounding Simon Rosedale in Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, which is set at about that time.)

Through the nineteenth century, Jews became prominent in the American theater business, and Steven Alan Carr's book reproduces cartoons about Jewish producers that would have made Goebbels envious. When film was invented, Jews were among the earliest entrepreneurs in every branch of what quickly grew into the film industry. Anti-Semitism exploded. The theater now became, in popular effect, a lesser part of the American cultural scene, and the fact that Jews so quickly were prominent in this overwhelming new power provoked something near to frenzy in the press and even the pulpit. The virus was ready, so to speak, and waiting—this new stimulant propelled it. Carr's book, though he doesn't emphasize this aspect, is in essence the history of a twentieth-century epidemic derived from an ancient venom. The ancient bile, newly simmered, spewed into channels of the whole American social landscape.

HOLLYWOOD AND ANTI-SEMITISM is intensely researched and sensibly weighed. Carr begins his account with what he calls "the Gabler paradox." This is the contradiction that underlies Neal Gabler's valuable study *An Empire of Their Own*, which appeared in 1988. In his introduction, Gabler observed:

> The paradox is that the American film industry ... was founded and for more than thirty years operated by Eastern European Jews who themselves seemed to be anything but the quintessence of America.... While the Hollywood Jews were being assailed by know-nothings for conspiring against traditional American values and the power structure that maintained them, they were desperately embracing those values and working to enter the power structure.

Gabler principally investigated Holly-

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wood figures and their society. Carr broadens his inquiry to examine larger social and political evidences, around the country, of the peculiar animus resulting from the Gabler paradox: how these very Jews who were trying to be ultra-American provoked American hatred.

As an instrument for his inquiry Carr devised a concept that he calls "the Hollywood Question"—a phrase with which he wishes to update that venerable and troublesome phrase "the Jewish Question." The latter, he says, is a term that "in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century ... articulated a problem: given their cultural and religious differences, should Jews enjoy the same basic rights as everyone else?" He says that the Hollywood Question is "not a garden variety of anti-Semitism," that such a diagnosis fails to understand "the full impact of the Question." I am unable to see that Carr's book benefits to any great degree by his change of name; but whatever the term, the results of his inquiry are vivid, disgusting, and enlightening.

His work is in three parts, dividing the 1880–1941 span of the book into chronological segments. Here I cite examples from all three parts of the areas into which Carr has traced the rush of the anti-Semitism caused by Hollywood. Part One covers the period from 1880 to 1929. The years before the arrival of film, in 1895, set the tumid scene. After film's arrival, the first explosion was in the subject of sex—not so much sex on the screen as behind it and around it. Sex is so dominant an element in films, however chaste, and the presence of attractive women is so essential, that Hollywood's *odore di femmina* quickly infuriated the ready-to-roll haters. This sexual obsession had festered viciously enough about Jews as theater producers; but because films were exponentially so much more invasive of privacy and fantasy, the presence of Jews at the source of these invasions was especially intolerable. Lovely gentile maidens in the paws of ape-like Jewish studio chiefs: this was too much.

Oligarchy came soon after sex. Jewish business control of films excluded others (it was claimed) and allegedly fostered Jewish warpings of the truth, and this "fact" galvanized virulent elements in the pulpit as well as the press. (With an ancient spurious logic, this Jewish prominence was also attacked because it was disproportionate to the Jewish percentage of the immigrant population—less than two percent in 1910.) The real fact that the majority of American films were wrapped in cookie-cutter, red-white-and-blue virtues mattered little to those clergymen and editors who were hungry to hate.

One especially bitter instance was the behavior of the Catholic Church. In the nineteenth century, American Catholics, especially the Irish, had been constantly affronted by the Protestant majority. (As late as the late 1920s, when I was a boy working summers on upstate New York farms, if I made a mistake I was called "you Irishman.") Still, when the chance came to Catholics to use comparable tactics on others, they seized it. Admittedly they were in some degree heated by Irish stereotypes in films, but these only opened the floodgates of long-stored Catholic hatred of Jews. (This subject has only recently come in for wide discussion.) Early-twentieth-century Catholic organizations and churchmen attacked pictures that they said were produced by "foreign-born Jews of the lowest sort." In 1927, for example, Jewish-owned studios presented *The Callahans and the Murphys*, about feuding tenement families, and *Irish Hearts*, about immigrant romance—two sentimental films that Catholic groups assailed as ethnic caricature.

Congress itself found time to debate the Jewishness of the film world. In 1926, after a Ku Klux Klan newspaper fumed (without specification) about the way that "certain Jew pictures" ridiculed "the Protestant ministry of the land," Representative W. B. Shaw of Georgia testified to the same effect before a federal hearing. The heat was heated further by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the malicious forgery about Jews that arrived here shortly after World War I. A grating oddity: the *Protocols* assailed Jews for their radicalism, not for their capitalist greed, and one result of this new angle of attack was to link Jews with the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti. The arrest and eventual execution of those two men in 1927, says Carr, "attested to a fear of radicalism and anarchy that extended to almost any foreigner, but especially Jewish immigrants."

In part two, dealing with the years from 1929 to 1941, Carr examines the ways in which the Question was linked with the Depression, communism, and the approach of World War II.

> Throughout the 1930s the stereotype of the Jewish movie mogul implicitly addressed crises representative of New Deal concerns. The immoral, leering, hook-nosed, cigar-chomping executive became yet another enthymeme of the Hollywood Question—a lament for an older traditional order and a protest against a newer, urban, diverse, and global one. For many surviving the crisis of the Great Depression, the movie mogul explained a great deal about what had happened and was happening in America.

An outstanding figure in this mode of Jews-as-whipping-boys was the "Radio Priest," Father Charles Coughlin of Detroit, who in the 1930s was estimated to have an audience of more than thirty million weekly listeners. To increase his audience, Coughlin indicted Jews for their influence on America's foreign policy, especially for their softness, as he saw it, on communism. American films, he held, were insufficiently anti-communist (all the while that those pathetic Hollywood producers were sweating to be Yankee Doodles in extremis). Sanctimoniously Coughlin would speak of his "fellow Jews" but asked, despite the Gabler paradox, why movies poured "pitiless propaganda upon the silver screen of our nation to deceive us." I can still hear Coughlin's smarmy voice distinguishing between good Jews and "bahd" Jews.

My memory was jogged again by the name of William Dudley Pelley, whose face and prattle were once familiar to newspaper readers and newsreel viewers. Pelley began as a journalist, then went to Hollywood in the 1920s and wrote screenplays, some of them based on his own novels and stories. Several of his screenplays were produced, including *The Shock*, which starred Lon Chaney. But after some reverses in Hollywood and a nervous breakdown, Pelley organized a fascist group called the Silver Shirts and founded a magazine called *Liberation*, which was furiously anti-Semitic. He scorched the "controlled" press, replete with what he called "Jewspapers," and of course attacked Jewish control of the film studios where he had once worked. What chills even in retrospect is the fact that Pelley and Coughlin and similar others were at the time regarded by many simply as part of the American scene. Comparable minds and mouths exist today, of course, and they have their listeners and readers, but such figures are not now usually treated merely as nutty curiosities.

The American air today is much clearer of these fumings. And what helped to clear it, to a very considerable degree? Irony past the ironic. There arrived in Europe the worst ill wind of the century, which nonetheless blew some good. It is a dreadful but ineluctable fact, as Carr shows, that the rise of Hitler in Europe gradually ameliorated anti-Semitism in this country, at least in its public manifestations. True, as late as 1941 a congressman such as John Rankin could contend that Jewish bankers had "created Hitler" but as early as 1935 *Fortune*, in an article by Archibald MacLeish, contended that "anti-Semitism in America, judged by its exponents, is a very sick donkey." Certainly the donkey still lived, but it was increasingly seen as a donkey.

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The donkey stumbles on into Carr's Part Three, "1941 and Beyond." In 1941, Charles Lindbergh, a fervent isolationist, said:

> Instead of agitating for war, the Jewish groups of this country should be opposing it in every possible way.... The greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio and our government.

This seemed a warning that if this country entered the war, Jews would be blamed and persecuted. Yet at the same time, owing to the rise of fascism in Europe, Carr says that in America "outright anti-Semitism could prove a political liability, rather than galvanizing rhetoric." Carr cites Leo Rosten's book *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (1941) as one of the turning points. Among its many clarifications, Rosten addresses the derision of the founders as refugees from the garment business: "In no other industry is humble origin interpreted as a skeleton in the closet rather than proof of admirable success." (In the 1930s J.B. Priestley had described Hollywood producers as "tailors become caliphs.")

Another large index of an atmospheric change, inversely pleasant, came in novels by Nathanael West, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Budd Schulberg, "which rehabilitated the Shylock Jew as part of a larger critique of the American Dream, locating this stereotype not in some Other but within the very fabric of American life." In other words, it was now possible for authors to treat Jewish characters candidly, without seeming or intending to seem anti-Semitic. (By the time Herman Wouk's novel *Marjorie Morningstar* became a best-seller in 1955—the heroine's name had originally been Morgenstern—the topical joke was that Wouk's book made it chic to be Jewish.)

In 1941, the year of the Lindbergh speech quoted above, the Senate began its Hearings on Motion Picture Propaganda, headed by the isolationist Gerald P. Nye. Carr writes: "The hearings were, in fact a showdown between a traditional, isolationist America and a modern New Deal, interventionist America. The Propaganda Hearings also marked a decisive shift in the popular perception of Hollywood." The end result was in some measure an acknowledgment of the Gabler paradox, because of the terrible world situation: "the Jewish movie moguls represented a new kind of ethnic agency, ardently defending the principles of America's founding fathers."

Everything thereafter was not—never will be—roses all the way. Carr even makes a case that the epochal consent decrees of 1947, with which the federal government forced the film studios to divest themselves of the theaters that they owned, had some basis in anti-Jewish feeling. Another wormy sector bulged out of postwar anti-communism, which became an acceptable, even laudable means of being anti-Semitic because so many on the left were Jewish.

An anti-Semitic leaflet from the 1930s

COURTESY CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Still, the experience of World War II certainly improved matters. American films began to treat Jewish characters not only as sympathetic figures but as principals. Says Carr: "Both *Crossfire* (RKO, 1946) and *Gentleman's Agreement* (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1947) condemned anti-Semitism, not because of its prevalence, but because of its aberration. As both films suggest, anti-Semitism operated distinctively at odds with democratic ideals." With *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959) Hollywood—for the first time—even "treated the Holocaust by focusing on anti-Semitism." Today the situation is so completely revised that it may be difficult for some to believe that the conditions in Carr's book prevailed so widely for so long. Today it would be impossible to make a film for general release in which a Jew was lampooned as a Jew, and today few public figures ululate in anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Extremities on the political-religious right and some racial panjandrums remind us that this country is not purged of anti-Semitism, but we have only to consider the success of Woody Allen to recognize that today a Jew can even satirize himself with reliance on the audience's view of him as a fellow citizen, not a member of a lower order. Then consider the name, simply the name, Dustin Hoffman. It would have been impossible for a star to use that name in the earliest film years. When an actor who was born Douglas Ulman began his career early in the last century, he became Douglas Fairbanks.

How blameless were the Jews through all those decades of vituperation? Completely. To cite vulgarity or greed or misbehavior on the part of some Hollywood producers, to find one iota of justification for the slime, is to destroy opposition to the slime. To venture an immense, infernal comparison, it would be like conceding that some of the Jews sent to Auschwitz were despicable people. That must be true. What difference does it make?

Although Carr doesn't stress the matter, his book makes one point stubbornly clear: Jewish "domination" of an industry, if and when it happens, is neither to be masked nor apologized for. Jews founded and dominated the American film industry, yes: why didn't others? Why didn't others at least give them sizable competition? (Spyros Skouras was one, but how many others?) Since that did not happen, it was inevitable, in the historical view, that anti-Semitism would well up. The best response to the "charge" of Jewish prominence is a simple fact: it was true.

Carr's research opens new corners and highlights old ones. (One slip: Edward G. Robinson played an Italian gangster in *Little Caesar*, not in *The Public Enemy*.) His writing is serviceable, except when he tries to make it fancy. ("The cultural margins were quickly migrating toward the center of popularity.") But his book establishes a grimly fascinating and uncomfortably close chapter in the long history of a curse. ■

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Honors

THOMAS MIDDELHOFF IS CEO of the German company Bertelsmann Verlag, perhaps the largest media conglomerate in the world. Bertelsmann owns book publishers, magazines, newspapers, music labels, and a host of ventures on the Web. It also owns a Nazi past, having propagandized for Hitler's regime. That's not unusual—most German corporations facilitated Hitler's work (and not only German corporations; IBM provided the Nazis with equipment and materials to make their death camps more efficient). What is unusual is that Bertelsmann, at least during Middelhoff's tenure, hasn't tried to cover up its crimes. (IBM hasn't been nearly as forthright.) In fact, Middelhoff established a commission of scholars, chaired by Saul Friedlander, the eminent Israeli historian of the Holocaust, to scrutinize his company's Nazi record. In response to its findings, Bertelsmann has contributed to a fund compensating wartime slave laborers and made other large gifts to projects for Holocaust survivors. Bertelsmann and its foundation have also undertaken a vast project to retrieve and restore the records of lost German Jewish communities that were stored, typically, in repositories called *genizot*. And the foundation sponsors scholarly and honest conferences on Jewish-German relations, several of which I've attended.

THIS WEEK, THE UNITED JEWISH Appeal-Federation of New York will honor Middelhoff at a dinner at the Waldorf, and this honoring has upset some of the UJA's benefactors. Some complained to *The New York Times*; one big donor brought his grievances to UJA officials. As it happens, Middelhoff needs no defense. He was born in 1953, about the time David Ben Gurion and Konrad Adenauer were linking Israel's precarious destiny to Germany's nascent conscience. If, as the Hebrew Bible instructs, "the children's teeth shall not be set on edge . . . because their fathers have eaten sour grapes," then surely a corporate executive should not be condemned for his predecessors' transgressions. But the objections to honoring Middelhoff are not really about him at all. They are about Germany, which makes them just as idiotic. The truth is that Germany has done more to confront its past than any other European country. Of course, there is more to confront. But there's a lot to confront in Poland, too, and, as the reaction to Jan Gross's book *Neighbors* makes clear, many Poles still don't want to confront it. Germany is also, not coincidentally, Israel's best friend in Europe. One reason to remember the Jewish past—and to help others remember it—is to preserve the Jewish future. In its relationship to Israel, Germany helps to do just that.

IF AMERICAN JEWS WANT TO HOLD A grudge, they should hold one against Austria instead. Austria, a country chosen over the United States for a seat on the U.N. Human Rights Commission, has a Nazi apologist party in its government. Before that it elected a former Nazi as its president. And, before that, that former Nazi was secretary-general of the United Nations. I was reminded of Kurt Waldheim by the release last week of 10,000 pages of CIA documents under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998. THE NEW REPUBLIC was the first publication (in articles in 1980 by Shirley Hazzard, myself, and other editors) to assert that Waldheim had been a Nazi and had brutalized Jews and others in Yugoslavia and Greece. I was first alerted to Waldheim's past by a letter from a reader who had experienced his cruelties and said he would never forget his face. I nosed around and was even visited by Waldheim's lawyer, who insinuated I could be in for a defamation suit. One of the people I consulted was an old Yugoslav friend, Vladimir Dedijer, who had been high in the wartime maquis and in Marshall Tito's government. He told me that, of course, the Yugoslavs knew about Waldheim. How could they not? They had had their own secret inquest on him in 1947. This, of course, meant that the Soviets knew all there was to know. In fact, Dedijer argued, it was because they grasped Waldheim's vulnerability that the Kremlin leaders supported him for secretary-general. And Waldheim's endless apologies for Soviet behavior during his time at the United Nations make the theory more plausible. Given all this, it was surprising and dispiriting to find in last month's CIA document dump that the U.S. government "did not have a great deal of information or knowledge about Waldheim's Nazi past." Dispiriting because, given that both Belgrade and Moscow probably knew about Waldheim's past, I find it hard to believe Washington did not.

THERE ARE 62 BUNTING FELLOWS AT the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard this year, and they are a diverse and intellectually serious lot: scholars and scientists, writers and painters. Oh, yes, and one agitator: Allegra Pacheco, there as a "peace fellow." Pacheco, the recent author of an op-ed in the *Times* and the subject of a fawning interview on NPR, is not pursuing "advanced studies"; she is propagandizing for the dissolution of the state of Israel. She wants "the establishment of a democratic secular republic in all of Palestine." Very simple, very irrelevant, very stupid. What's more, after Peace Now ran ads in Arabic-language newspapers asking Palestinians to relent on the right of return, Pacheco urged Al-Awda, the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition, to lead a Palestinian boycott of the Israeli group until it backed down. That's just nuts. I've certainly had my differences with the leftists who run the organization, but no one can deny that they are among the most dogged advocates of conciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. And, if the Palestinians aren't to talk to the Israelis in Peace Now, to whom ought they speak? Peace fellow, indeed!

POOR NEIL RUDENSTINE. IN TWO months he leaves the presidency of Harvard, where he has been a failure and a bore. But in a sense he's already been banished—by undergraduates who occupied his offices for three weeks to protest the fact that Harvard employs workers at below a "living wage," defined by the Cambridge city council as $10.25 an hour (just over $20,000 per year). Harvard also employs many workers for fewer than 16 hours per week so it doesn't have to provide them health benefits. And it outsources certain campus functions to keep wages and health care costs lower still. I have qualms about student sit-ins. (I had them in 1969, too. On the other hand, these students are not as morally haughty or as physically aggressive as the students were then.) Still, a rich university—to say nothing of a university with an endowment of more than $19 billion—should be mortified to have anyone in its employ at less than a certified living wage. This is the ugly face of cultural liberalism. It cares about gender and race; it wants multiculturalism and inoffensive talk. But it doesn't give a damn about the workers without whose brains and brawn no student could get a meal or walk through the snow to the library or to class. Rudenstine has agreed to a committee, including students and union leaders, to examine wage issues at the university. It will mean, at the least, applause from the crowd at his final commencement. Though some will wonder whether the applause isn't also in appreciation of the fact that he will soon be gone.

MARTIN PERETZ

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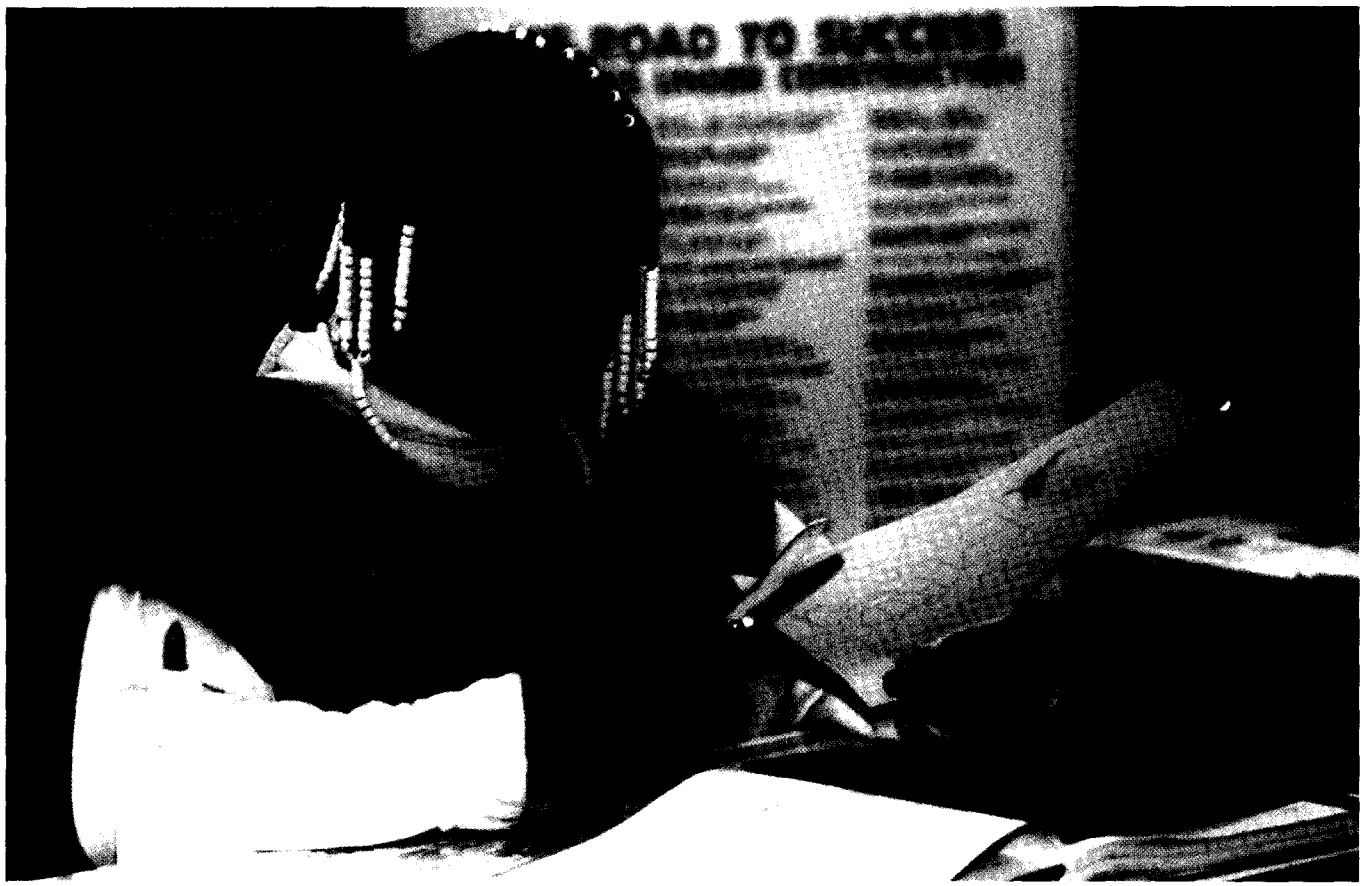

Public Schools Improve with School Choice

The following editorial appeared in the April 25, 2001 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:

In trying to gauge the success of Milwaukee's school choice experiment in boosting student achievement, researchers in the past have compared the learning of students in the program with that of their peers who remained in the public schools. Taking a different tack, Harvard economist Caroline Hoxby looks at the achievement levels of public school students alone.

She is taking seriously a main rationale for the voucher program: that choice creates a competition with the public schools and, as a consequence, prods them to reform. Hoxby's finding is that there seems to be fact to back the theory. The more competition a public elementary school got from the voucher program, she says, the more it tended to improve.

Parental School Choice is Widespread — Unless You're Poor

School choice remains a contentious issue, and Hoxby's study will certainly not be the final word. But her work does reinforce an impression shared by many observers, including this newspaper's Editorial Board, that school choice has prompted innovations within the Milwaukee Public Schools.

The voucher program rests chiefly on two philosophical underpinnings:

- As a matter of equity, low-income parents deserve a range of school options, similar to what other parents enjoy by virtue of their relative prosperity.

- Competition would stir giant, moribund, monopolistic, rules-encrusted, reform-resistant school bureaucracies into better serving students.

Hoxby's work shores up the latter rationale. Indeed, it can be argued that raising achievement for students left in MPS is even more important than lifting it for choice students. After all, the MPS students outnumber the latter, 10 to one. In that respect, the competition theory amounts to a powerful argument for choice.

By the way, in an interview with the Journal Sentinel, Hoxby attributed MPS improvement to more than immutable laws of economics. She noted that the school system chose to respond to the competition by bettering itself - for which MPS deserves credit.

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Black Alliance for Educational Options

For more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org

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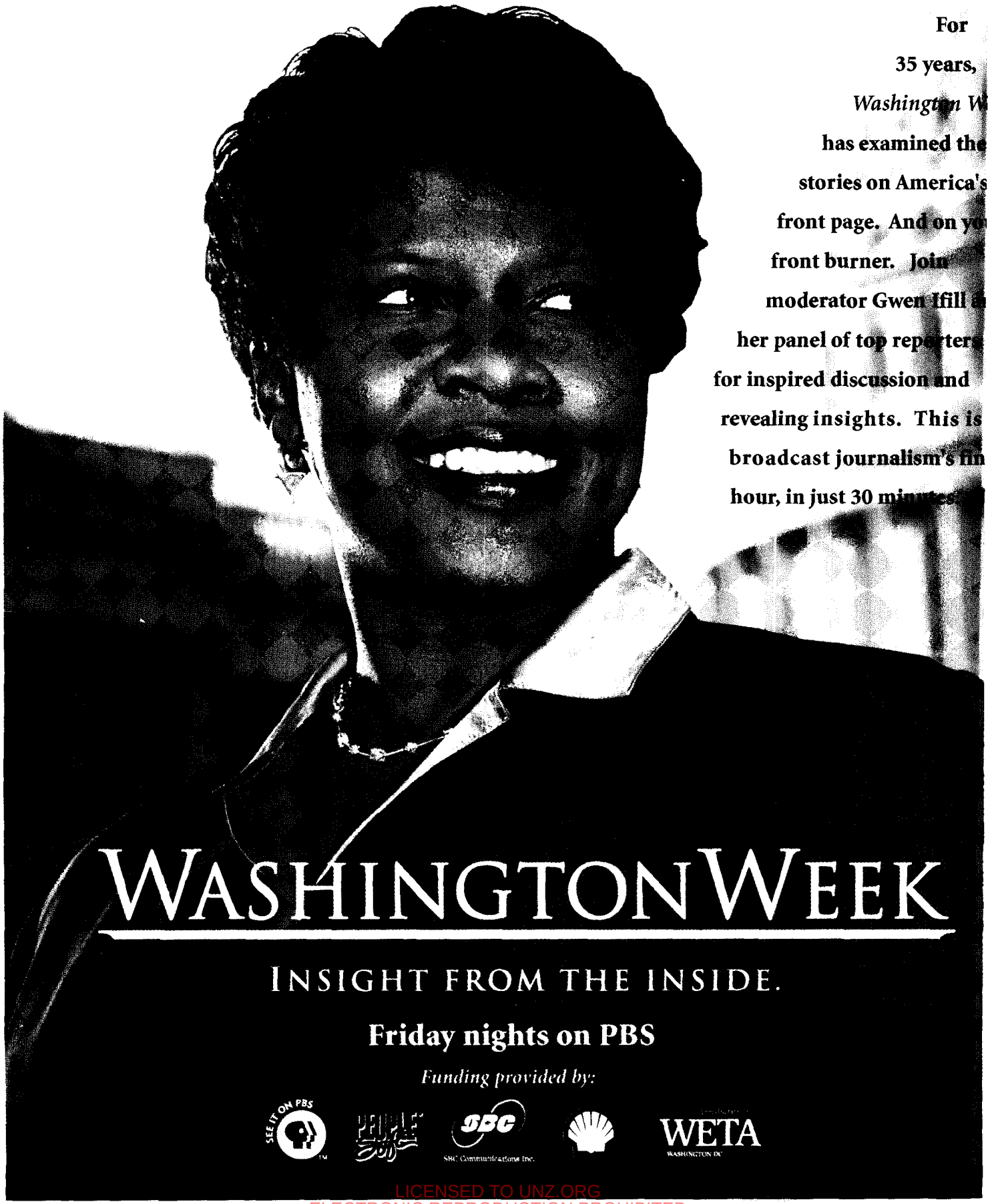
The issues, not loud. Just clear.



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